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ELEMENTARY
PRINCIPLES
OF THE
BELLES LETTRES.

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WITH
Reflections on PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS.

TRANSLATED from the FRENCH

By the late Mr. SLOPER FOREMAN.

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P R E F A C E

BY THE

T R A N S L A T O R.

THE advantage and pleasure resulting from the study of the Belles Lettres, are so obvious, and so universally acknowledged by all civilized nations, as to render any arguments in its favour, needless: But with regard to these Elementary Principles of the ingenious M. Formey, it may be necessary to observe, that they are admirably well calculated for conveying a perfect knowledge of the Belles Lettres; and that this work has the advantage over others on the same subject, inasmuch as the examples by way of illustration, are taken from the most

iv P R E F A C E.

celebrated French and Latin writers, (particularly the former) though at the same time honourable mention is made of the most valuable of those of our own country. The beauties and defects of many of the French authors, which have been hitherto but little known to the generality of English readers, are in the ensuing pages, displayed, and impartially considered; and the poetical, as well as prose quotations, extracted from their works, are translated into English: So that every possible means are used, in this little Tract, to render the attainment of the Belles Lettres easy and delightful.

T H E

THE
AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION.

Addressed to

Monfieur V E R E L S T.

YOU have imagined, Sir, that you received some advantage from the discourses we have regularly had together, on the subject of the Belles Lettres; and sensible of the confidence you repose in me, I have done every thing in my power to give you the most distinct ideas of the principal matters comprised in the extent of literature; and to conduct you to the purest sources, from whence you may completely imbibe what the time allotted for our conferences did not permit me to communicate to you. I have no occasion, Sir, to make a long elogium here, on the Belles Lettres, to animate you to the

a 2

study

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study of them. I have perceived with pleasure that you greatly relish these sciences, and that you very happily seize whatever they possess most worthy of attention; for a choice must be made, and nothing but the flower of things, if I may use the expression, should be taken. The art consists in properly making this choice, not to suffer ourselves to be dazzled by false beauties, and to distinguish the value of real ones. The accumulating too great a quantity of knowledge at random, over-loads the mind instead of adorning it: It is like a superabundant repast, where the multitude of dishes, rather disgusts than excites the appetite. But when we possess enlightened principles, and are initiated into a familiarity with good Authors, we may pass during the rest of our lives many delicious moments in their company, and experience the truth of this fine passage of the Prince of Roman Eloquence: "These studies nourish youth, rejoice old age, embellish prosperity, console and serve as an asylum in adversity, afford us pleasure when at home, embarrass us not elsewhere; they pass the nights with

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*“with us, and abandon us not either in our
“travels, or in the field.*”*

I wish, Sir, that you may have the most happy and long experience of these advantages inseparable from the Belles Lettres; and that sustaining with honour the illustrious name you bear, you may attain the highest offices in the respectable state, of which you are a member. The Belles Lettres, and those who cultivate them, will then, without doubt, find in you an enlightened friend, who will support their interests with zeal, and voluntarily endeavour to procure for true merit, the rewards which are due to it. If I live long enough to be a witness thereof, I shall rejoice, and flatter myself with having contributed, in some measure, to inspire you with this taste, and of confirming you in these laudable dispositions.

* The oration for the poet Archias.

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ELEMEN.

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2. Yet, in order to be more accurate, we
of knowledge, as we have, properly speaking,
exercise itself freely, and as it were, direct
itself, by presenting them under various forms
2. It is in the knowledge of these rules
and in the art of applying them, rather to the
works we read, or to those we compose, that
the study of the Belles-Lettres chiefly consists.

Elementary Principles OF THE BELLES-LETTRES.

I.
*Of the BELLES-LETTRES in general *.*

1. **T**HE *Belles-Lettres* may comprize human knowledge without exception, so far as the several branches of this knowledge are susceptible of being presented in an agreeable manner, and embellished with such ornaments, as respectively suit them. Though the *Worlds* of Mr. de Fontenelle are a work of philosophy, and especially of natural astronomy, they are nevertheless most pleasantly written, and therefore belong to the *Belles-Lettres*.

* I premise once for all, that I shall extract from the tracts of the Abbé Bouteux, and some other good authors, what suits my purpose; but as I chuse to think rather than copy, what I borrow will not be considerable.

Taste is a judicious and refined choice in any matters as, the choice of site, and plan of house; elegant furniture; disposition of gardens, lawns, plantations, avenues, walks &c. - Dress - Companions, &c. &c.

2 ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES

2. Yet, in order to be more accurate, we shall confine the *Belles-Lettres* to such branches of knowledge, as are not, properly speaking, sciences, and require no rigorous demonstrations, but on which the human mind may exercise itself freely, and as it were, divert itself, by presenting them under various forms, yet so as to be subjected to some rules, and dependent on theory.

3. It is in the knowledge of these rules, and in the art of applying them, either to the works we read, or to those we compose, that the study of the *Belles-Lettres* chiefly consists.

II. Of TASTE.

4. Taste is the soul of all our studies, and it would be a mistake, if we thought it banished from the dominions of the sciences. The more they refine and elevate our intellects, the more our taste must feel and gain by it. A man is not really learned, when the sciences have destroyed or injured Taste.

5. Taste consists in discerning the different beauties interspersed in the works of nature and art, so far as this knowledge is accompanied with sentiment. This definition removes all the difficulties, and all the ambiguities, which abound in

in the discussions hitherto made on this quality of the soul, in confining it sometimes to knowledge alone, sometimes to sentiment only.

6. The astonishing diversity of *Tastes*, proceeds, and must necessarily proceed, from the unequal distribution of the two principles of *Taste*, learning and sentiment.

7. The capricious and transient *Tastes* of the multitude, are not worth regarding: They are the effect of prejudice, passion, or the mode. When these causes cease, their effects cease also.

8. The *supreme taste* of a finite Being, should consist in the highest degree of knowledge, joined to the most exquisite sense: But as this junction does not exist in the same individual, the man that comes nearest to it, must be deemed to be possessed of the *best Taste*.

9. The *supreme Taste* of the infinite Being, is the infinitely distinct knowledge of the beautiful, as well in general, as in all the determinations of which it is susceptible, and which it receives in the system of the universe *.

* I take these definitions from a piece intitled, *An Analysis of the Notion of Taste*, which I have placed at the end of my edition of Father Andre's *Essay on the Beautiful*, published at Amsterdam, by Scheidner, 1759.

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III.

Of the BEAUTIFUL.

10. It is very difficult to attain to the primitive ideas of the *Beautiful* in every kind of beauty, so as to digest them in order, especially in distinguishing, on this matter, three things which are almost always confounded at the expence of truth, viz. the general notions of fine sense, which give us the permanent rules of the *Beautiful*; the natural judgment of the soul, where sentiment is intermixed with ideas purely witty, but without destroying them; and the prejudices of education, or of custom, which sometimes seem to subvert both.

11. There is an *essential Beautiful*, independent of any institution, which is the eternal rule of the visible beauty of bodies. The slightest attention to our primitive ideas, is sufficient to convince us, that regularity, order, proportion and symmetry, are essentially preferable to irregularity, disorder, and disproportion.

12. There is a *natural Beautiful*, dependent on the will of the Creator, but independent of our opinions and tastes. The *essential Beautiful*, considered in the structure of bodies, is, as one may say, nothing but the ground of the *natural Beautiful*; a ground rich and agreeable

able in itself, but which, with all its beauties, would be more pleasing to reason, than to the eye, had not the author of nature taken care to set it off with colours, and to embellish it with an infinite variety of forms.

13. There is a third kind of the *Beautiful*, which we may call *arbitrary*, or *artificial*. Such is the *Beauty* of system, or of manner, in the practice of the arts; the *Beauty* of mode, or of custom, in dress; certain allurements or graces, even personal, which often have no other merit, than that of having by chance, pleased that set of people who take the lead in the fashionable world. But, as there is much of the arbitrary, in those ideas of beauty, we must beware of concluding, that every thing *Beautiful*, is arbitrary.

14. The infinite diversity of opinions and tastes, does not prove that there is no rule to judge of the *Beautiful*. This rule is the very division of the three species of *Beauty* just indicated; and if we will go farther, one may yet distinguish several kinds of the *arbitrary Beautiful*, viz. in genius, in taste, and in pure caprice.

15. *Unity* constitutes the form and the essence of the *Beautiful*, in every kind of *Beauty* *. But it must be seasoned with va-

* Omnis porro pulchritudinis forma unitas est. St. Aug. Ep. 18. Edit. P. P. B. B.

6 ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES

riety, because this essentially pleases the human mind, animates it, and prevents its growing drowsy.

IV.

Of NATURE and ART.

16. Nature being constant and invariable in her productions, always brings the same properties into the same species. The artist, on the contrary, who sets himself to imitate nature, of which he has but a very imperfect knowledge, is at first embarrassed about the choice of the objects, and the manner of combining them. His mind is limited in his views, and his power in the use of the means.

17. The works of nature support themselves without alteration, just as they originally came forth from the hands of the creator. On the contrary, in arts, the species often alter and degenerate: Sometimes the matter resists the efforts of the artist, and sometimes he wants the art of governing his matter.

18. Each subject gives to itself a particular form and nature; each work constitutes a separate species; and sometimes between two

† 'Tis this principle of variety reduced to uniformity, that Mr. de Crouzas has developed in his *Traité de la Beauté*, an esteemed work.

species

species comprized under the same genus, there is nothing common to them but the name. Such is the case with poetry. We thus call an epic poem, and an epigram; a tragedy, and a song. What other comparison is there between these species of poetry, than that of being in verse?

19. Of all the arts of imitation, that which least deviates, is painting; because it has a precise object, which is visible nature, and a precise manner of representing it, which is the drawing and the colouring. On the contrary, in poetry and music, where we are in pursuit of an idea that flies before us, running after a sound which we have but barely supposed, it is a kind of prodigy, that art alone should be capable of producing a certain series of thoughts, that lead to the formation of a natural whole.

20. One of the greatest perfections of nature lying in the uniformity of each species, it is essential that the arts should imitate it in this part; so that with them, each thing be what it ought to be, and that it be so in an evident manner, ascertain'd by an essential difference that immediately strikes the mind: Otherwise, we fall into the inconveniency of vague ideas, which nothing can bring to a termination, nor separate from other objects*.

* *Vanae finguntur species.*

HORACE.

V. Of

8 ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES

Of POETRY.

21. Poetry is the art of bringing under the yoke of measure, or of rhyme, ideas fit to paint certain objects, and to move the heart. The different species of poesy may be reduced to four kinds; the *narrative*, the *dramatic*, the *lyric*, and the *didactic*.

22. Each kind of poetry is essentially characterized, either by the quality of the actors, or the nature of the subject, or the very effect which the work produces. However, it is the effect that attracts every thing to itself; it is the center, the design, and the term of the piece.

23. In distinguishing the different sorts of passions that may be wrought upon, we find the several species of poesy. The epic poem creates admiration; tragedy forces tears from us; comedy makes us laugh; and pastorals produce gentle and calm sensations. It is the same with all the other kinds. Every reader expects to receive from them, an impression of such or such a kind; and if the work does not convey it to him, or conveys it but imperfectly, in a confused, equivocal manner, he has a right to be disgusted.

24. 'Tis

24. 'Tis nature that forms poets, but it is art that brings them to a certain degree of perfection.

VI.

Of the EPOPEA.

25. The term *Epopæa*, taken in its full extent, denotes a poetic recital, whatever the subject of it may be: But custom has decided that this name, or that of *epic poem*, should be given only to a poetic recital of some great action, in which whole nations, or even all mankind, are interested.

26. *Epopæa* differs from history, as fiction does from truth. History sets down facts, just as they are, without altering or embellishing them: *Epopæa* invents every thing that it may stand in need of, and knows no other bounds than possibility.

27. It is expected from an *epic poem*, that it should charm the reader, excite his admiration, employ at once his reason, judgment, and wit; touch the heart, and make the soul feel a series of delightful situations, which must be interrupted a few moments, but only in order to be renewed with the more vivacity.

28. The

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28. The epic poet, is supposed to be endowed with the privilege of inspiration. The verses are dictated to him by a muse, a celestial Being, who is not only well acquainted with the spring of all the natural causes, but also knows the action of the supernatural causes.

29. In defining *Epopæa* to be a poetic recital of a marvellous action, we see in these few words, how this kind of work differs from romances, which go beyond the probable; from history, which does not go so far as the marvellous; from the drama, which is not a recital; and from other little poems, whose subjects have nothing noble nor heroic.

30. The matter of the epic poem is an action, that is to say, an enterprize made with choice and design.

31. The first quality of the epic action, is unity. Two actions going on together hand in hand, would destroy our interest therein, by dividing it.

32. The whole life of a hero, cannot be the subject of a regular poem; because, 1. it is a too extensive whole to be taken in at one view; 2. every thing in the life of a hero, is not heroical; and, 3. the facts are not necessarily linked with one another, to attain an end that may comprize them all as means thereto.

33. There

33. There is then *unity* in action, when it is independent of all other actions, and all its parts are naturally linked together.

34. Here a question arises; What is it that makes this independence, and this interior unity of parts? Is it the unity of the moral maxim resulting from the poem? Is it the unity of enterprize, that of a hero, or the excellence of some one amongst those whom this title fits? All this is liable to inconveniences; therefore we must seek for the unity of action, only in the proposal of the subject. This proposal announces the end of the poet; it shews the beginning of the action, and fixes its termination.

35. As there does not really exist any action quite detached from the total mass of human causes and actions, it rests on the poet to make a *whole* of the part he chuses, and to terminate it in every sense, by separating it from every thing that is relative thereto. Thus *Homer* says, *I will sing the wrath of Achilles*: It was at his option to say, *I will sing the taking of Troy*.

36. We must not confound the unity of subject, with the unity of action. A subject may be *one*, and yet contain an infinite number of actions; such as the entire Roman History would be, if it were turn'd into a poem.

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37. The unity of action does not exclude the use of *Episodes*. We thus denominate certain little actions, subordinate to the principal action, in order to unbend the reader's mind by this variety. These scraps might be omitted, and yet the poem in which they are found, would still be an epic poem.

38. *Episodes*, in the beginning, were recitals interspersed in the lyric songs, composed in honour of the gods. In process of time, the episodic recital became the principal subject, and the song became episodic.

39. In the epic poem, and where-ever an *episode* is found, it is a part subservient to the principal action, but which might be left out, without hindrance to the winding up of the bottom. Yet it must, Firstly, be brought in by circumstances; 2. it must be concise, because it is only a relaxation given, by the way, to the mind; 3. it must offer objects different from those that precede and follow it, since it is made use of only for the sake of variety; and, 4. it must be in the general strain of the work in which it is inserted.

40. The epic action must be complete; that is, it must necessarily consist of a beginning, a middle, and an end. In a poem, no author would set before us an action begun, or leave it unfinished,

41. The

41. The interesting part is essential in an epic poem, and it may be two fold; the one respecting the nature of the action and object; the other depending on the obstacles to be surmounted. The first moves us, and is the pathetic part; the second excites our curiosity, and may be called the marvellous.

42. What affects us, includes several sort of interest or concern. National interest: A Roman interests himself in the enterprize of *Aeneas*, because he is a Roman. Religious interest: A christian interests himself in the enterprize of *Godfrey*, who goes to recover the sepulchre of *Jesus Christ*. The interest of nature or humanity: Every man is concerned at the misfortunes of another man. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* comprize these three interests with regard to the Greeks, as the *Aeneid* does with respect to the Romans. In our days there is nothing remains for us, but the interest of humanity.

43. The *Epopœa* chiefly interests us by the admiration arising from the heroic and marvellous objects it presents. But as it is the parent and the source of all the other kinds, it must include all the interesting parts of them. To be an epic poet, one must be every thing, and that in an eminent degree.

44. The interest that arises from obstacles, forms what we call the *plots* and the *unravel-*

14. ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES

ling. The obstacles presented, are called *plots*; and the manner in which the hero surmounts them, is the *unravelling*. The reader takes part with the hero, and shares with him all the situations through which he passes.

45. Every poetic action must have a *plot*, otherwise it cannot be interesting. 'Tis difficulty that irritates noble passions, and sets great virtues to work.

46. In the epic action there is a *principal plot*, and *subordinate plots*. The principal must have unity; the number of the others is regulated according to necessity and probability.

47. The *plots* proceed either from the ignorance, or the weakness of the acting person. The first kind are solved by the knowledge of what was unknown; the second by destroying an opposing force, through a superiority of strength or art. The first kind of *unravelling*, is called unravelling by discovery; the second by *peripetie*, or a sudden turn of fortune.

48. The plot may be in the very action, when the enterprize is difficult in itself, or in some outward obstacle. It is better placed in the action: The more intricate it is, *i. e.* the more difficult to unravel, the more perfect it is.

49. The

49. The plots and the unravellings are, properly speaking, the true characteristics of every species of poetry. The plots contain the efforts of the acting cause: The unravelling contains the effect produced, or wanted, by that cause.

50. In the epopea, the gods are actors in all the parts; and from one end to the other we see supernatural beings concerned in the events. Hence arises the marvellous which is deemed essential to the epic-poem, and to which it owes its lustre and success: For all men delight in the marvellous; and this taste, which discovers itself so strongly in our infancy, only changes objects in more advanced ages.

51. Those men who lived nearest to the origin of the world, resembled children, through the imperfection of their knowledge, and consequently were still more eager for the marvellous than those of our days. This made them greatly relish the mixture of the action of the gods, with those of men, which served,
1. To give an *eclat* to heros, and render the narration more interesting; 2. To confirm the readers or the audience in the idea they had, that there were gods among them, to assist or punish them according to their merits. Such is the primitive source of the marvellous in the epopea.

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52. In examining attentively the poems of *Homer* and *Virgil*, we see their plan consists in constituting the gods the grand actors of the epopea, who appear but at certain distances, and in making men the subaltern actors, who almost always have a part in the scene.

53. Is it essential that the epic poem be marvellous in this way, *i. e.* that it should always employ the intervention of supernatural causes? To answer this question, we must remember the object of this kind of poetry: All agree that it is to excite admiration. Now, what means are more natural and more certain to create it, than to employ the marvellous, by shewing the action of a Deity upon man, and by what secret force it governs him? Besides, this system has nothing in it but what is noble; nothing can be finer, greater, more suitable to a genius almost divine, than to represent the whole universe as moving under the eye and by the hand of the Supreme Being.

54. Christianity may countenance this kind of poetry, without prejudicing the respect due to religion.

55. If we seriously introduce a respected divinity, decency requires us to give it an object worthy of it, according to our ideas, and to associate it with actors of elevation and dignity. But if the subject has but little of the serious,
such

such as the *Secchia Rapita* and the *Lutrin*, then one may employ the comic ministry of some Pagan divinity, or some allegoric genius, which, vested with a suppositious power, may supply the place of supernatural machinery.

56. In this manner we may distinguish two sorts of the epopea, and both of them marvellous, the one heroic, and the other comic; but the name of the genus will remain, by way of excellence, to the heroic epopea.

57. There are two sorts of divinities, the onereal, as Jupiter, Neptune, &c. the other allegorical, as Discord, Peace, &c. We cannot give the latter a close or continued part to act, because they are, in the main, but a figure of rhetoric. But the real divinities act occasionally mixt parts, *i. e.* sometimes real, sometimes allegorical; and then the allegory must have a literal sense, apparent enough to be discovered as such, and taken literally.

58. There must be no miracle in an epic poem; nothing but the marvellous in it: And if this marvellous is sensible and reasonable, it is confined to removing the veil that covers the secret springs of nature, and representing the conduct of the God, with respect to human things. *Nothing is beautiful but truth.*

59. It is however better to indulge some flights, than to be always in a congealed regularity.

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larity. The vigorous character that goes beyond the mark, is preferred to that which dares not attain it.

60. The ministry of divinites ought not to extend to trifling details. In attempting to ennoble the thing, we abase the God.

61. The marvellous of the epopea, which consists in unveiling the supernatural springs of a great action, may and ought to be reconcilable with probability, which consists in exhibiting those springs, just as they are, in the opinion of those for whom we write.

62. The action of the epopea is not necessarily allegorical, as is pretended by Father Le Bossu, in his treatise on Epic Poetry, which, however, is a very judicious work. According to his opinion, the action of the epopea is solely intended to envelope and teach a moral truth, which must be chosen previous to the composition of the poem. All that can be granted this author is, that a maxim of morality may result from the epic action, as it would in general result from any human action whatever. There is not a passage in history, but what has its seed of instruction enveloped.

63. If it be asked, Why then is fiction used in the epopea? We answer, it is in order to propose examples of such a perfection, as are not to be found in the real examples of society, or of history; 'tis to shew in the springs of an action,

action, arranged for this purpose, the principles of the religion, the society, and the government, of those for whom the poem is made; 'tis to describe the manners and customs of nations in peace and war; in fine, 'tis to convey a perfect knowledge of man, his passions, his vices, his virtues, his strength, and his weakness. 'Tis for this we invent in the *epopea*, as history does not afford any action that can comprize so many objects. Poetry paints these objects in a grand stile, puts energy and life into them.

64. The number of the actors in the *epopea*, and the qualities that suit them, is determined by the necessity of the action, and by probability. We must employ therein neither more, nor less, nor any others, than those wanted, in order to make the principal personage attain his end.

65. The action of the *epopea*, is the act of one man, or of several, or even of a whole people. In general, every work in which we see the action of a particular man, will concern us more than if it contained the action of a nation; because the reader, being an individual, brings all home to himself.

66. The qualities of the actors consist in the character and the manners given them. The manners are commonly founded on the character, and the character is contained in the manners. If we would more exactly distinguish

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tinguish these two things, *character* may be considered as a natural disposition, which makes a man act rather one way than another; and by *manners* may be understood, a disposition acquired by a repetition of acts, whether induced thereto by nature or education, by example or reason.

67. The order of principles and effects in the natural conduct of man, may be expressed thus: The character determines the manners; manners, joined to the character, determine the will at the presence of the object; the will being determined, produces the exterior and sensible act.

68. This character, these manners, this interior will, can be known only by actions and discourses, which are the images of the soul, whether in its habitudes or in its actual sentiments. Therefore, there are morals in a poem, whatever it may be, when the very discourse of the speaker, or the action of the agent, sensibly bears the stamp of his character, of his sentiments, and of his actual disposition.

69. The poetic rectitude of the manners, consists in the conformity of the actions, and discourses of an actor, with the opinion we have conceived of him. Thus *Nero* must be cruel, *Tyberius* distrustful, &c.

70. The

70. The heroes of poetry must be above ordinary men; but all perfections must not be united in a single one: For then he becomes a prodigy, and is no longer interesting. The character of *Aeneas* falls into this inconvenience, which is not met with in the hero of the *Iliad*.

71. When a character is entirely new, i. e. when some personage is introduced who is not known, either in fable or history, we must begin by exactly determining this character, and keep up to it in the sequel.

72. In general, the manners must be supported; and it is not allowable to act against this rule, except when we intend to paint inconsistency, or caprice.

73. Manners variegated in the different personages, mutually set off and give lustre to one another. They may be varied three ways; 1. In the same species, and only by the difference of degrees; 2. By the addition of another quality, which, without being predominant, alters the species; and, 3. By the very difference of the species.

74. It is a defect of genius, and of resource in the artist, to draw himself, in words, the portrait of him whose manners he would paint. 'Tis by the actions and the discourses, that characters must be established.

75. To

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75. To examine now the form of the *epopea*; we first find therein the *proposition* of the subject, which determines the unity of action, and then the *invocation* of a divinity, who reveals to the poet the supernatural causes of the event he is going to relate. The proposition must be simple, clear, and without ostentation. The invocation may be in a very elevated stile.

76. The *things* in the *epopea* are the action, and all its parts, great and little, essential and integral, those of necessity, and those of ornament. Genius produces and arranges them.

77. The fountain from whence genius is supplied, is nature, by which is meant, 1. All that is actually existing in the universe; 2. All that has existed before our days, and which we may know from the history of times, places, and men; 3. Every thing that may exist, but which perhaps never did, nor ever will exist. This makes, as it were, three worlds; the real, the historical, (which includes the fabulous,) and the possible world.

78. A skillful poet, should rather take his materials where they are, *i. e.* in the very things that exist, in the history of past ages, in the ideas and opinions of men, than to make too free with the right of inventing and creating.

79. There-

79. Therefore the true function of genius is not to create. 'Tis, in the first place, to form a plan; secondly, to seek and find materials to complete it; lastly, to know how to suit those materials, which nature furnishes him with, to the artificial plan he has formed. Herein consists the great superiority of *Homer* and *Virgil*.

80. The art of poets, in their narration, consists in rushing at once into the midst of the events, as if the reader were informed of what has preceded them, especially when the enterprize is of long duration. The recital is begun very close to the action, and means are found to defer shewing the causes till some favourable opportunity, which the poet contrives.

81. A particular art, with respect to the very form of the epic stile, is to give a dramatic turn to most of the narrations. This induces us to observe, that there are three different forms which poetry may assume, in its manner of reciting. In the first, the poet does not appear; we see none but those whom he puts in action. In the second, the poet shews himself, and does not make his actors appear. The third is mixed; i. e. that, without bringing the actors in view, their speeches are cited, by putting them into their mouth, as proceeding from them, which forms a species of

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of the drama. History itself, has a right to throw this dramatic turn into some places, in order to please by variety; with much more reason is it done in epic poetry, which uses, without scruple, all the means of pleasing.

82. The poetic stile requires an uncommon art: We must duly feel *the power of a word rightly placed*. The models given by *Boileau*, in this respect, are incomparable. We therein find, 1. True, just, natural thoughts, and these introduced in the most happy manner; 2. Words admirably chosen to convey his meaning; 3. Turns of a singular force and simplicity; 4. A description of details, which, in shewing the parts of certain objects, seem to multiply those very objects; 5. A natural harmony, which consists in the choice of certain sounds, and in their combinations, agreeably to the nature of the object expressed; 6. The number or distribution of the pauses, according to the wants of the mind, the respiration, and the ear; in fine, 7. The artificial harmony of the versification, which has rules dependent on taste, and others upon art.

83. The rules of taste, with regard to artificial harmony, determine the choice of sounds; and that is according to the language in which the poet writes. The rules of art, consist in chusing the kind of verse intended to be used. Each species of poetry has its peculiar

cular versification: That of the *epopea* is heroic, which, in Greek, Latin, and French, is of twelve feet, with a pause about the middle, and a final of a sensible cadence.

84. The verse requires to be elevated by the very stile to which it is the measure: And there are three sorts of stile; the simple, the medium, and the sublime. These three species have degrees in each, which it is difficult to fix; but our ideas in this kind, as in several others, may rest on the models given us by great authors. *Homer* and *Pindar*, among the Greeks, *Virgil* and *Horace*, among the Latins, the tragedies of *Corneille*, and the odes of *Roussseau*, would serve as limits here, had we not the inspired books, such as *Job*, the *Psalms*, and the *Prophets*.

85. The dignity of the actors, determines the degree of rising in the *epopea*. The muse that speaks in it, is obliged to borrow the speech of men, but she makes use of all the means fit to heighten it.

VII.

Of Epic Poets.

86. *Homer* is the father of epic poetry; and, according to the most general opinion, he is

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also superior to all that have succeeded him. He probably lived 850 years before the Christian æra, and might have seen, in his infancy, some old men who had been eye-witnesses of the siege of Troy. However, we are quite ignorant concerning his person; and it was not 'till long after his death, that seven potent cities disputed with each other the honour of his birth.

87. The partizans of *Homer* have spoken of him rather like passionate lovers, than as discreet friends. Loving him with a kind of phrenzy, they wink at his faults, and will see nothing but his beauties. But this poet has had enemies not less ardent, who were obstinately bent on finding in him nothing but faults.

88. The *Iliad*, which is *Homer's* grand work, is replete with gods and improbable combats. These subjects are naturally pleasing to men, because they like every thing that appears terrible.

89. *Homer* is reproached principally with the extravagance of his gods, and the roughness of his heroes. But this is like censuring a painter, for having drawn his figures in the habiliments of his time. *Homer* described the gods such as they were believed to be, and men such as they were.

90. There has been a great dispute in France about *Homer*. The quarrel began by the

the *Parallel of the ancients and moderns*, published by Mr. Perrault. Though this work is very far from being despicable, Despreaux wrote against it with so much energy, that he seemed to have gained a complete victory. *La Motte* entered the lists against *Homer*, and had *Madam Dacier* to encounter. Few works are written with so much art, discretion, and delicacy, as Mr. *La Motte's* dissertations on *Homer*. *Madam Dacier*, whose erudition would have been admired in a man, maintained *Homer's* cause with all the heat of a commentator. One of the works wherein the questions concerning *Homer* are best discussed, is that of the *Abbé Terrasson*.

91. *Homer* has displayed genius in invention; taste and art in disposition; strength and accuracy in expression.

92. The Greeks were besieging *Troy*; *Agamemnon*, general of the army, quarrelled with *Achilles*, who was the most valiant hero engaged in it: Upon which the latter immediately withdrew from the camp; and the Greeks were beaten, 'till the disgusted hero, brought to a better temper by an accident which affected himself, changed the fortune of war. This is the whole subject of the *Iliad*, and the foundation on which the edifice of the poem is raised.

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93. The subject of the *Odyssey*, is the return of *Ulysses* to Ithaca, a little island of which he was king. This hero had not the advantage of being a demi-god by birth, like *Achilles*, who was the son of *Thetis*; but he had the merit of one, *i. e.* he was possessed of more than human fortitude of soul, with infinite prudence. The protection of *Minerva*, joined to these great qualities, rendered him as admirable as *Achilles*.

94. The *Iliad* is chiefly designed to affect, to astonish, to work upon the passions. The *Odyssey* is more calculated to instruct by its allegorical narrations, its imagery, and its maxims. In both poems, we find the same theology, the same arrangement of celestial with terrestrial causes.

95. The chief merit of *Homer*, consists in having struck out a road for himself, in which nobody had travelled before him. He runs without a guide, without art, without rule: He deviates in his career; but he far out-strips every thing that is only meer reason and correctness. He created his art, and left it imperfect; it is still a chaos, but light shines therein on every side.

96. Whoever has read *Madam Dacier* only, has not read *Homer*. Translations encrease the faults of a work, especially of a poem, and mar its beauties. 'Tis in the Greek only

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we can see through the negligences of the poet, the beauty of his stile, the energy and richness of his elocution, and the natural harmony of the finest language that ever was spoken by men.

97. *Virgil* availed himself of all the advantages of the æra he lived in. It was the fine age of *Augustus*, which abounded with men of letters, with philosophers who had read the ancient and modern authors; who had compared and discussed them, and were daily canvassing their beauties, in conversation and in writing. Accordingly we see, in every thing he has written, the care of an author acquainted with rules, who fears to offend them, who polishes and re-polishes without end, and apprehends the censure of connoisseurs. Always rich, always correct, always elegant, the colours of his portraits are as brilliant as they are exact.

98. Of all the monuments of antiquity remaining, the *Æneid* is the finest; *Virgil* derived the subject of his poem from the fabulous traditions concerning the arrival and settlement of *Æneas* in Italy, which superstition had handed down to his time; much in the same manner as *Homer* founded his *Iliad*, on the tradition of the siege of Troy. The subject could not be more happily chosen. Bordering on the fabulous times, almost fabulous itself, men

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had but vague ideas of it, and were thereby capable of lending attention to epic fictions: Besides this, there was an interesting relation between this subject, and the people for whom the author undertook to treat of it. The Romans pretended that *Æneas* was the founder of their nation, and the father of their first king.

99. *Virgil* could not avoid bringing into the scene the gods of *Homer*, who were also his own, and who, according to tradition, had themselves conducted *Æneas* into Italy. But some * pretend, he makes them act with more judgment than the Grecian poet, whilst others † are of opinion, that the ministry of the gods, full of fire and energy in *Homer*, is frigid in *Virgil*, who knows not how, like his model, to make it agree every-where, and reconcile it with the human agents.

100. The sagacity of *Virgil* borders upon timidity; he rather chuses to keep near shore, than to expose himself to a storm. Yet this does not prevent his being great; and he is more so, when he gives scope to his own genius, than when he stoops to imitation.

101. The six first books of the *Æneid* are extremely beautiful. *Virgil* exhausts all the

* Mr. de Voltaire.

† The Abbé Batteux.

powers of imagination, in the descent of *Æneas* to the regions of *Pluto*; he says every thing that can affect the heart, in the amours of *Dido*: He excites terror and compassion in the highest degree, in his description of the ruin of *Troy*. But, arriving at the middle of his flight, he is obliged to descend from that elevation; and the most universal objection against his poem is, that the six last cantos are unworthy of the six first. However, we must not think them void of beauties: In every place we discern a great master; and what the strength of his art has drawn from that ungrateful soil, is almost incredible. What offends most in this half of the *Æneid*, is, that we are tempted in reading it, to take part with *Turnus* against *Æneas*.

102. *Lucan*, descended from an ancient house of the Equestrian Order, was born at Cordoua in Spain, in the reign of *Caligula*, and having been brought to Rome at the age of eight months, he was educated in the house of his uncle *Seneca*. He was a favourite of *Nero*, 'till he was imprudent enough to dispute with him the prize of poetry, and the dangerous honour of winning it. Losing his favour by this means, *Lucan* engaged in a conspiracy, the discovery of which cost him his life.

103. The

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103. The poem he composed, turned upon a recent history; a task which *Varius* had already successfully executed before him. The personages of the *Pharsalia*, are much greater than those of the *Æneid*; but *Lucan*, not daring to deviate from history, thereby made his poem dry and barren. In endeavouring to supply the want of invention by grandeur of sentiment, he has often concealed sterility under bombast.

104. In *Lucan* there is no brilliant description, as in *Homer*. He had not, like *Virgil*, the art of narration, and of saying nothing beyond the purpose; he has neither his elegance nor his harmony. Yet still we find beauties in the *Pharsalia*, which are not to be met with in the *Iliad* nor in the *Æneid*. In the midst of inflated declamations, there are bold and masculine thoughts, and some of those political maxims with which *Corneille* abounds. Some of his discourses have the majesty of those of *Livy*, and the energy of *Tacitus*. He paints like *Sallust*: In short, he is great in every place where he does not aim at being a poet.

105. The barbarian conquerors who destroyed the Roman empire, spread their barbarism and ignorance all over the west. It was not 'till eight hundred years after, that arts began to revive; but, then, they revived in the

the form of Goths and Vandals. Poetry was the first art they cultivated with success; witness the works of *Dante* and *Petrarch*.

106. *Trissin*, author of the famous *Sophonisba*, the first tragedy written in the vernacular language, attempted an epic poem. He took for his subject, Italy delivered from the Goths by *Belisarius*, under the reign of *Justinian*. His plan is sagacious and regular, but the poetic stile is weak. Nevertheless, the work succeeded; and notwithstanding the far superior poems that have since appeared, *Trissin* retains the glory of having been the first modern in Europe, that composed a regular and sensible epic poem, though languid, and who dared to shake off the yoke of rhyme.

107. At the same time *Camoens*, in Portugal, was opening a quite new road, and acquiring a reputation which still subsists amongst his countrymen, who stile him the *Portuguesa Virgil*. The life of this poet was much chequered, and he died in poverty. His poem, intitled the *Lusiad*, is an epopea of a new kind; the subject is countries, till then unknown, discovered by the help of navigation. The simplicity of the poem is heightened by fictions, as novel as the subject: Some of them are happily imagined, but in most the marvellous is absurd. However, the work must needs abound with great beauties, since
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for two hundred years past, it is the delight of an ingenious nation, whom we must suppose to be competent judges of its defects.

108. We do not rank *Ariosto* among the epic poets, for this title cannot suit him, 'till we couple *Don Quixot* with the *Æneid*, and *Calot* with *Correggio*.

109. *Tasso*, on the contrary, is worthy of one of the most honourable places. He was the offspring of one of the most illustrious families in Italy, and at the age of thirty years, he published his *Jerusalem delivered*, which, it should seem, might have covered him with glory to the end of his life. Nevertheless, the rest of his career was nothing but a series of calamities and humiliations. When at the end of twenty years, honours and a fortune were offered to him, his mind, worn out with so long a train of misfortunes, was become insensible to every thing that might have delighted him.

110. The *Jerusalem*, in some respects, seems to be formed upon the *Iliad*; but *Tasso* went far beyond his model. He has painted what *Homer* pencil'd; he has perfected the art of colouring, and of distinguishing the different kinds of virtues, vices, and passions, which in another point of view seem to be the same. But, though this work abounds with beauties
univerfally

universally admired, yet there are many passages which are relished only in Italy, and some that ought not to please any nation. The author frequently falls into quibbles and puerile conceits: But these weaknesses were a kind of tribute, which his genius paid to the taste of his time for puns.

III. About the end of the 16th century, Spain produced an epic poem, celebrated for some peculiar beauties, as well as by the singularity of the subject, but still more remarkable from the character of the author. His name was *Don Alonso d'Ercilla y Cunga*, he commanded some troops in *Chily*, where he waged war in a little mountainous country, called *Araucana*, inhabited by a race of men more robust and ferocious than all the other American nations. In this war he went through extreme dangers, and performed the most astonishing actions. This occasioned him to conceive the design of immortalizing himself, in immortalizing his enemies. He was both a conqueror and a poet, and intitled his poem *Araucana*, from the name of the country. He has introduced much fire in the battles; but, as to the rest, there is no invention, no plan, no variety in the descriptions, no unity in the design. This poem is more wild, than the nations who are the subject of it.

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+ 112. *Milton*, whom the English now esteem as a divine poet, was secretary to *Oliver Cromwell*, and made his pen subservient to the justifying the death of *CHARLES I.* Being included in the amnesty granted by *CHARLES II.* he began his epic poem, at the age of fifty-two, and lost his sight when he had scarce set about it. He spent nine years in composing his *Paradise Lost*, with great difficulty found a bookseller that would venture upon it, and died without being sensible of the reputation this work would one day procure him.

113. Some learned Englishmen, and particularly the celebrated *Addison*, having relished this poem, pretended that it was equal to those of *Virgil* and *Homer*: They wrote to prove this assertion, the English persuaded themselves it was so, and *Milton's* reputation was fixed. *Mr. Dupré de Saint Maur* gave a very fine translation of it, which made it known in France.

114. It is astonishing to find in a subject, so seemingly barren as that of *Paradise Lost*, so great a fertility of imagination. We admire the majestic strokes with which *Milton* dares to describe *God*; and the brilliant character he draws of the Devil. We read with pleasure, the description of the garden of Eden, and the innocent amours of Adam and Eve. But, in extolling divers sublime flights, judicious

judicious critics agree in opinion, that several are over-strained, and rendered puerile only by the author's labouring to make them great.

115. Europe for a long time, thought the French incapable of the epopea; this judgment being formed from the poems of Chapelain, Le Moine, Desmarets, Cassaign, and Scuderi. Mr. de Voltaire has had the glory of giving his country a poem equal to the finest of any age and nation. X

116. The *Henriad* appeared for the first time in 1723, under the title of *The League*. The London quarto edition in 1726, altered the title to that which it has ever since retained in a multitude of subsequent editions. The *Henriad* has also been translated into divers languages; and as it has been generally approved, in a century which may be called the age of taste, it will probably be relished in future ages.

117. The *Henriad* may be put in the scale with the *Æneid*. We need but compare the plan, the manners, the marvellous of these two poems, the similitude of personages, the corresponding episodes, and the taste of both poets in the choice of these episodes; the art with which they have combined the facts; their comparisons, their descriptions, and their taste in general.

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118. The

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1118. The subject of the *Henriad*, is very well chosen; it is peculiarly interesting to the French, on account of its hero, who is the greatest monarch they ever had, and by the extraordinary events it recites. The plan is very artfully laid, and the beauties of description are incomparable.

VIII.

Of SPECTACLES, or SHEWS.

119. Mankind necessarily require to have shews of some sort or other: Hence has arisen the great number of them established in almost all nations. When nature in its effects, or society in its occurrences, does not afford sufficient occupation to men, they are under great obligation to those who have talents to create phantoms and resemblances without reality.

120. The grimaces of a quack mounted on trestles, may amuse the ignorant vulgar; but it was natural, and as it were necessary, that exhibitions depending on art, should be in time brought to perfection among polished societies.

121. Man himself, is of all objects, that which most concerns mankind. When we

see represented in another person, what we are ourselves, nothing is more proper to fix our attention, and strongly work upon the mind.

122. Man being a composition of body and soul, there are two sorts of representations in which he is interested. Nations that have cultivated the body more than the mind, have preferred shews which displayed strength of body and flexibility of limbs. Those that have cultivated the mind more than the body, have preferred such spectacles as exhibit the resources of genius, and the springs of the passions. There are some which have equally cultivated both kinds of representations, and honoured them alike.

123. Those spectacles in which we see strength and suppleness of body, scarce require any art, the action being free, serious, and real. On the contrary, those that put the soul in action, require a vast deal of art, because the whole is fiction, and the intention is to make it pass for truth.

124. Corporal representations must needs make a livelier and stronger impression: The shocks they give to the mind, render it firm, callous, and sometimes cruel. On the contrary, mental shews make a gentler impression, calculated to humanize and melt the heart, rather than harden it.

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IX.

Of the DRAMA in general.

125. *Dramatic Poetry*, is so called from a Greek word, which signifies *to act*; because, in this kind of poetry, the action is not recited, as in the epopea, but shews itself in those that represent it.

126. The dramatic action is adapted to the eye, and must be painted like truth. Now, the judgment of the eye, with respect to shews, is infinitely more to be dreaded than that of the ear: Therefore, in the drama they recite what would appear most improbable in shew.

127. The most difficult and important question in poetry, is to know in what dramatic probability consists.

128. The actions are either all true and historical, as in *Esther*; or only true in the main, and feigned in some particulars, as in the *Horatii*; or altered even in the foundation, as well as in the circumstances, so that nothing of the history is retained but the names, as in *Heraclius*; or, lastly, every thing is created and imagined, names, action, and circum-

circumstances, as is done in almost all comedies.

129. For an action to be conformable to history, 'tis sufficient to suppose it so. *Horace* says, *Famam sequere*. Suppositious truth, is as well received in poetry, as real truth and fact.

130. When we invent, we must, says *Aristotle*, present the feigned objects just as they might or ought to have been performed. Every man has not a very clear idea in regard to human action, of what is or is not possible. As to the possible in poetry, it is enough if men in general have a confused idea of this possibility, in such cases where, perhaps, upon a nearer inspection of things, there is a real impossibility.

131. Besides the *possible* and the *real* verisimilitude, there is an *ordinary* and an extraordinary verisimilitude. The first is that of an action that happens oftner, or at least as often, as its contrary. The second concerns an action that happens more rarely than its contrary, but still often enough not to be looked upon as a prodigy when it does happen.

132. We may also distinguish in dramatic action, three kinds of the *necessary*; that of things with regard to the action considered as natural; that of the same things with regard

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to the same action, considered as artificial; and, lastly, the necessary chain or consequence.

133. There are three sorts of *unity* in the drama; unity of action, of time, and of place.

If in one *Place*, one *Day*, one *Action* end,

The well-pleas'd Audience earnestly attend.

134. The action is *one*, when but one single end is proposed, to which all the means employed tend.

135. The dramatic action is divided into *acts*, and the acts into *scenes*. The act is an action which makes an essential part of another action, serves as a means to attain an ulterior end, and supposes other actions prior or posterior to it.

136. When all the actions are upon the same direct line, and bring on each other till they arrive at the proposed period, then the action is simple, and without episodes. But if, among these actions, there be any that are only collateral, and have but a superficial connection with the principal action, we call them episodic. They are more or less so, according as they coincide sooner or later with the

the principal action. When they do not unite with it, even in the fifth act, they are absolutely vicious.

137. The first act is called *protasis* by the ancients, because it contains the proposition of the subject, and must clearly set forth the business in hand. It likewise acquaints us with all the actors, and gives part of their character. In fine, the plot begins in it, and the unravelling is prepared, but still without making this preparation too perceptible.

138. In the second, third, and fourth acts, the knot is gradually drawn closer, and the concern of the spectator progressively encreases. Nevertheless, moments of joy and hope are interspersed, which relieve the mind, in order to make it fall again into the greatest agitations.

139. The fifth act must be more affecting than all the others, because, the longer the spectator has waited, the less willing he is to wait. In this act, the author decides the fate of all the personages that have appeared in the piece; and in the last scene the unravelling is completed.

140. A scene is part of an act, characterized by the entrance, or by the exit of some of those who bear a part in the action.

141. The unity of time is from sun-rising to sun-rising, or twenty-four hours; i. e. that the

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the action represented, must begin and be ended within that space. This rule is not so much a rule of rigour, as a modification, a softening of the true rule, according to which the action should not last longer than the representation, that is to say, begin and end in two or three hours at most.

142. The four inter-acts, serve for distributing skilfully the time that ought to elapse between the events; and one of them may contain a whole night.

143. The unity of place, taken rigorously, would also require that every thing be done precisely in the same place, and that indulgence, which enlarges the limits of time, cannot so conveniently enlarge the limits of place. If any change were made in it, it would either be done without changing the decorations, and then there would be confusion in the representation; or else the decorations would be changed, and thereby the charm of illusion would be broken.

144. This rule greatly embarrasses poets, and often reduces them to unnatural suppositions. The ancients had the advantage of laying the scene in a public place, whither every one resorted in coming out of his house, and where business was transacted.

145. As to the dramatic stile, it is regulated by the state of the speaker. This state respects

respects either his condition, or the passions which then agitate his mind.

146. In general, every dramatic actor ought to avoid what may savour of art, or of declamation; as, 1. Moral sentences, or thoughts too common; 2. Figures of oratory; 3. Every thing that may indicate it is a poet, or an orator, that suggests to the actors what they speak.

147. The discourse of an actor speaking alone, is called *monologue*, or *soliloquy*. Every monologue ought to be short, because it is almost out of nature. If it be long, the actor must be in a violent agitation.

148. The *dialogue* is when several actors speak to each other. Every person that speaks, must have a reason, at least an apparent one, for speaking.

149. The distribution of speech in the dialogue requires so much the more art, as this art must be concealed.

150. *Theatrical Decoration*, must be suitable to the quality of the actors. If they are shepherds, the scene is a landscape; that of kings is a palace, and so of the rest.

151. Provided the character of the place be preserved, it is allowable to embellish it with all the richness of art; colours and perspective are all the expence of it.

152. The

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152. The *Theatre* among the Romans, was a large and magnificent place, with long porticos, covered galleries, and fine walks planted with trees, in which the people walked till the plays began. They distinguished in the theatre, properly so called, three parts; 1. The *scaffold*, or the scene, which we now call the theatre; 2. The orchestra, which we name the pit; and 3. The amphitheatre.

153. All the actors were masked. Their masks were an entire head, like a helmet, having a painted visage, hair, colours, and a large mouth, so disposed that it greatly swelled the voice. Therefore they were called *persona*, à *personando*.

154. To express the alterations of the passions, the actor used to take a mask, which, beheld in profile, represented joy on one side, on the other grief, &c. and dexterously turned himself about, when necessary.

155. The Grecian actors wore long robes, called *styma*. In comedy they had cloaks, *pallia*; and the Romans wore long upper garments, called *toga*.

156. The declamation of the actors was a kind of singing; it had notes as music has, but not characters like those of the musical song.

157. The art of gesture being among the ancients part of the music, it had its notes,

as declamation had; and what now appears ridiculous to us, is, that among the Romans it was common to hear one actor declame, and another to perform the gesticulations.

158. The covering for the feet and legs in tragedy, was the *cothurnus*, or buskin, with high heels, which raised the stature of the actors, and made them approach to the heroic size. The sandal or sock, *soccus*, was flat and in the common way. The names of these things for the foot and leg, are made use of, to point out the two species of the dramatic.

159. It is extremely rare to find a perfect actor: Several have part of the talent; scarce any one possesses it wholly.

160. Tragedy shares with the epopea in the grandeur and importance of the action, and differs from it only by the dramatic form.

161. As there are in the epopea two sorts of the grand, the marvellous, and the heroic; so there may be two sorts of tragedies; one heroic, which we simply call tragedy; the other marvellous, which is called a lyric spectacle, or opera.

162. An

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162. An opera is therefore, as to the dramatic part, the representation of a marvellous action. The actors are gods, or the heroes demi-gods; and they announce themselves by such feats, language, and inflexion of voice, as surpass the laws of ordinary probability.

163. It was necessary that the language of opera actors should be entirely lyric, that it express the extacy, the enthusiasm, the ebriety of sentiment, to the end that music might produce therein all these effects.

164. *Tragedy*, on the contrary, does not deviate from nature. What is grand in it goes no higher than heroism. Its object is to excite terror and compassion.

165. Every theatrical action, is properly an alarm of the affections and the passions. But the action of tragedy is a violent shock, because the greatest concerns are depending, the encounters being between extraordinary powers, the powers of heroes, i. e. of men much superior to other men.

166. With statuaries, the figure of a man is of the natural size when it is under six feet: It is heroic when between six and ten; and beyond this it is a colossal statue. According to this analogy, the action of tragedy is heroic, when it is the effect of a quality of the soul carried to an extraordinary degree, and

and extraordinary to a limited point. Below this, it is the common, and beyond it the gigantic. The great, the beautiful, the noble, in short, the heroic, are found in the medium.

167. Vices are included in the idea of that heroism we are speaking of. They are heroic, when their principle is some quality that supposes uncommon boldness and resolution. Such are the intrepidity of *Catiline*, the revenge of *Medea*, &c.

168. An action is heroic, either in itself, that is, when its object is great, or from the character of those who perform it, when kings or princes act, or are acted against.

169. There may, and there has been brought upon the stage, a low or *City Tragedy*, which by its adversaries is called *weeping Comedy*. But since it is an agreeable and interesting entertainment, the name given to it is nothing but playing upon words. It shall be, if they will, a third species of the drama, a new source of theatrical pleasure. The same may happen in time to the pieces of Mr. *Diderot*, when they shall have been brought to the perfection they are susceptible of, or the public shall have stamp'd them with the seal of its approbation.

170. All pleasure and all pain felt at a tragedy, are founded on this maxim: *Homo sum,*

F

humani

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humani nihil à me alienum puto. Tragedy exhibits men that strongly bear the stamp of human nature, that have its passions, its excesses, its weaknesses, and its miseries; and it presents them on that side which may create pity and terror.

171. Pity makes our bowels yearn, because we see our fellow-creatures unhappy. Terror makes the heart shrink, because we fear for ourselves the misfortunes we behold in others: But this fear is mixed with a certain pleasing sensation, which proceeds from the comparison we make of our own condition with that of the unhappy sufferers.

172. *Tragedy* is characterized by the species of the sentiment it produces, not by that which it contains.

173. Every tragedy which occasions only terror, or pity, is imperfect: That which produces neither of these sensations, is not really a tragedy; and that producing either only in some places, is a tragedy but in those places.

174. The enterprize of a good man ought to be good, otherwise he would cease to be good. That of a wicked man must be bad, otherwise he would cease to be wicked. That of a man in the middle way, ought to be good in itself, but accompanied or preceded by some other thing that makes the actor blameable.

The

The good or the bad must go beyond mediocrity, otherwise there would be nothing heroic in it.

175. The virtuous man ought to triumph over the wicked: There results from it a joyous sensation, proportionate to the preceding fears and inquietudes. Yet, according to *Aristotle*, the unravelment that is performed by joy, is more comic than tragic.

176. Let a virtuous man, or at least one more virtuous than vicious, be the victim of his duty, as the *Curatii*; or of his own weakness, like *Ariadne* and *Phædra*; or of another man's weakness, like *Polixenus*; or of a father's prejudices, like *Hippolytus*; or of the transient anger of a brother, like *Camilla*; let him be precipitated by a misfortune which he could not avoid, like *Andromache*; or by a kind of fatality to which all men are liable, like *Oedipus*; this is the truly tragical, this is what shakes the soul, pierces the heart, and makes us shed tears.

177. When we join to the atrocity of the action, the splendor of grandeur, or the elevated station of the personages, the action is at the same time heroic and tragical, and produces in us compassion mixed with terror; because we see men, greater, more potent, more perfect than ourselves, crushed by the misfortunes incident to human nature.

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178. The conflict of the passions, is what interests us most in a tragical representation. Sometimes they wrestle together in different persons: Sometimes the conflict is in the same person and in the same heart, and this produces agitations infinitely stronger. According to the laws of decorum, the nobler passion ought always to prevail.

179. It is not necessary that blood should be shed, in order to excite tragical sensation. *Ariadne* forsaken by *Theseus* in the isle of *Naxos*, and *Philoctetes* in that of *Lemnos*, are in tragical situations, because they are as cruel as death itself.

180. *Greece* was the cradle of the fine arts, and 'tis there we must look for the origin of dramatic poetry. The festivals of *Bacchus* gave birth to it. They sacrificed a he-goat to that god; and during the sacrifice, the people and the priests sung in chorus, in honour of that deity, hymns which, from the nature of the victim, were called *tragedy*, or the *goat-song*.

181. These hymns were nothing but a lyric chant, in which there prevailed a kind of monotony, that at length lulled the congregation to sleep. In order to throw more variety into it, they introduced an actor, who recited something. *Thespis* was the first who attempted this novelty. This recital was divided

vided into several parts, to intersect the song at different times, and encrease the pleasure of variety.

182. As there was but one actor in it, this was not sufficient: A second was wanted, to constitute the drama, and make a dialogue. *Æschylus* availed himself of the opening made by *Thespis*, and suddenly formed the heroic drama, or *tragedy*. He introduced two actors instead of one: He made them undertake an action, in which he transplanted every thing of the epic action that could suit his purpose. He brought into it exposition, plots, efforts, unravelments, passions, interests. He gave characters, manners, and a proper elocution, to his actors; and the chorus, which in the beginning had been the basis of the spectacle, was then but its accessory, and served only as an interlude to the action, just as the action had formerly been to the chorus.

XI.

Of the ancient DRAMATIC Authors.

183. Tragedy, with *Æschylus*, has a gigantic air, hard features, and an unruly gait. It was new-born tragedy, well framed in all its parts, but yet destitute of that politeness

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liteness which time and art add to new inventions.

184. *Sophocles*, happily born for this kind of poetry, with a large fund of genius, a delicate taste, a wonderful facility of expression, reduced the tragic muse to the rules of decency and truth. He knew how to affect the heart throughout the action, and carefully laboured his verse; in short, he rose by his genius to such a degree, that his works are become the example of the beautiful, and the model of rules.

185. *Euripides*, at first applied himself to philosophy; hence it is that all his pieces abound with excellent maxims of morality. He is tender, affecting, truly tragical, though less elevated and less nervous than *Sophocles*. He composed seventy-five plays, and yet was crowned only five times; but justice was not always consulted in the distribution of these honours.

186. In general the Greek tragedy is simple, natural, easy to be followed, and little complicated. The action is prepared, is woven, and unravelled without labour; art does not seem to have the least share; and on this very account it is the master-piece of art and genius.

187. *Seneca*, a Latin tragic poet, is much inferior to the Greeks. His pieces are monstrous

strous colossuses rather than proportioned and regular bodies. They abound with superfluations. We abhor his descriptions, and are disgusted and tired with his prolixity and redundancy.

XII.

Of COMEDY.

188. Tragedy is an imitation of the beautiful and the grand: *Comedy* imitates the ridiculous. The one elevates the mind and forms the heart; the other polishes the manners, and corrects the outward demeanour. *Comedy* may be defined a representation of an action in common life, calculated to make the audience laugh.

189. The ridiculous, then, is essentially the object of comedy. But what is it we call ridiculous? It is, according to *Aristotle*, every defect that causes deformity without pain. The business of comedy is deformity relative to manners, represented in its ridiculous light.

190. This deformity consists in a contradiction of the thoughts of some man, of his sentiments, of his manners, of his air, his way of doing things, to nature, the received laws

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laws and customs, and to whatever seems to require the present situation of him in whom the deformity exists.

191. Every thing that is ridiculous, is not capable of exciting laughter. There is a ridiculousness that is slovenly, and disgusts the spectator: This is of the clownish kind. He that appears on the stage, should be agreeable and delicate. In painting the manners of citizens very near the resemblance, it is usual to add at the same time, a certain spice of the grotesque, which is more easily felt than defined.

192. What the Latins called the *vis comica*, is the truly ridiculous, but laid on thicker or lighter, according as the comic part is more or less delicate. There is an exquisite limit, within which laughter is not excited, and beyond it risibility ceases, at least among well-bred people. The more our taste is refined, and exercised upon good models, the more we feel it.

193. Truth is deeply coloured, 1. When the strokes are multiplied, and presented combined together; 2. When any action exceeds ordinary probability; 3. In striking contrasts.

194. In comedy may be distinguished two sorts of actors and characters, the one true, the other comic. The first must be rendered, as in tragedy, with truth, accuracy, strength, and

and decency: The other with more force than truth, more affectation than accuracy.

195. The ridiculous occurs every where; not one of our actions, thoughts, gestures, motions, but what are susceptible of it. They may be preserved entire, and turned to grimace by the slightest addition. So that whoever is born a comic poet, has an inexhaustible fund in all the characters to be met with in society.

196. Between the two extremes of the delicate and the nervous comic characters, there are several mediums, of which it is easy to form an idea; and perhaps it is in the medium only, that the true comic exists, which cheers the mind, and at the same time strikes the imagination.

197. the stile of comedy ought to be clear, simple, familiar, yet never low, groveling, nor heavy; seasoned with smart, delicate thoughts, expressions more lively than pompous, without lofty words, formal figures, and long sentences of morality.

198. Not but that comedy sometimes raises its tone; but, in its boldest flights, it does not forget its limits; it is always what it ought to be.

199. *Comedy* arose after tragedy. In its beginnings it painted from nature, which required much less genius than is necessary in draw-

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drawing characters and manners. *Old Comedy* had a long while the privilege of attacking citizens, and even the gods, with impunity: But when it dared to take magistrates in hand, they put a curb upon it, and made a law against bringing any known names upon the stage.

200. In order to elude this law, *middle Comedy* assumed imaginary names, under which they painted from nature, the characters and manners of those who were to be turned into ridicule.

201. A second law, forbade making real adventures the subject; and brought comedy to nearly the same state in which it is at present. Instead of being a satire on individuals, it became the mirror of life and manners; and this was called *new Comedy*.

XIII.

Of the ancient comic Poets.

202. The taste of the people for whom the comedies of *Aristophanes* were written, and the taste of the author, are their criterion. The people of Athens were vain, light, inconstant, without morals, without respect for the gods, insolent, malignant, and more
prone

prone to laugh at an impertinence, than to take instruction from an useful maxim. *Aristophanes* himself had all these vices; and consequently, without any reluctance, he fell in entirely with the taste of the public for whom he wrote.

203. His *Plutus*, which is one of his best conducted pieces, may shew how far this poet has carried the licentiousness of imagination, and the frolics of genius. Here he rallies the government, lashes the rich, insults the poor, mocks the gods, and scatters his filth: But all this is done by sallies, and with a great deal of vivacity and wit.

204. The Romans made attempts towards comedy, before they had any acquaintance with the Greeks, but they had nothing but farcical actors, fit to amuse the vulgar. *Livius Andronicus*, a Grecian by birth, exhibited comedy to them nearly the same as it was then at Athens; but the expression was necessarily tinged with the rudeness of the Roman people, who were then acquainted with nothing but war and arms.

205. *Andronicus* was succeeded by *Nevius* and *Ennius*, who polished the Roman stage more and more, as did likewise *Pæurvius*, *Cecilius*, and *Attius*. At last came *Plautus* and *Terence*, who carried Latin comedy as high as ever it has been.

206. *Plautus*

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206. *Plautus* having given comedy to Rome, immediately after the satires, which were farces mixed with rudeness and obscenities, he was obliged to adapt his works to the reigning taste. Born with a free and lively genius, he has every where strewed wit and pleasantry; but bad puns, trifling quibbles, silly jests, and buffooneries, remain in his pieces.

207. *Plautus's* pieces are more natural than those of *Aristophanes*, except the *Amphytrion*. Men, and human adventures, are always presented under probable characters, without intermixing those whims and oddities with which the Grecian poet abounds.

208. *Terence's* manner is quite different from that of *Plautus*: His comedy is nothing but the portrait of city-life; a portrait where the objects are chosen with taste, and painted gracefully and elegantly. Every where decent, delicate, elegant, polished, and graceful; he wants nothing to make him perfect, but the true *vis comica*, which we have mentioned Sect. 192. Hence it is, that his dramas are almost of the middling kind. In many places, his pieces only want atrocity in the events, to make them tragical, and importance to render them heroic.

XIV.

Of the FRENCH Theatre.

209. The eleventh century, notwithstanding its profound ignorance, gave birth to the poets that wrote in *Roman*, that is to say, in the corrupted Roman language, which was become the only vulgar tongue.

210. They made themselves more known in the twelfth century, under the names of *inventors*, *story-tellers*, *singers*, and *jugglers*. Their works were void of rules, sublimity, and correctness; but, to make amends for these defects, there were simplicity, ingenuousness, and sometimes strokes of genius agreeable enough in them.

211. These sparks of poetry, appeared chiefly in the two extremities of the kingdom, Provence and Picardy. With the poetical spirit, a spirit of gallantry was diffused in France. In Provence, there was the famous *Court of Love*; and Picardy, its rival, had also its *Sports and Pastimes under the Elm*. X

212. The *Troubadours* (or *Inventors*, as they are above called) composed some comedies, of which there is only one left, intitled *de l'Heresia del Preyres*, of the heresy of priests.

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The

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The author's name was *Anselm Faïdit*. He was a man of pleasure, who took a young lady of quality out of a monastery and married her, and they passed their life in going from one court to another, always welcome every where.

213. The fourteenth century produced fewer poets than the preceding ages. The shortness of PHILIP THE LONG's reign, was an irreparable misfortune to the provençale poetry. In this century we find one tragic poet, *Parasols*, a native of *Limosin*, or of *Cisteron*, who composed five fine tragedies of the exploits and atchievements of *Jane* queen of *Naples*.

214. In the fifteenth century, properly speaking, the history of the French theatre begins. The oldest plays we have at this time, are *The Mysteries of Religion*. They did not then think it any prophanation to bring sacred things upon the stage; and this partly proceeded from the low ideas men had of those things, and partly from their being accustomed to representations in divine service. Accordingly, a play was only like a supplement to that service, and was even usually acted in the church-yards or burying grounds.

215. *John Michel* wrote a play about the middle of the fifteenth century, which was an historical series of the life of *Jesus Christ*,
from

from his baptism to his resurrection. There are no acts in it, nor have the scenes any connection. When the personages on the stage have said what they had to say, they retire, and others come on, who discourse on quite another subject. After a sufficient number of scenes the day ended, without any other reason, but that they had spoken enough. The spectators departed, and the next day as much was exhibited again. This took up several days.

216. Most of the plays of the passion, were a kind of opera: There was machinery and music in them. Some of those pious representations, were dumb-show, and they were used as ornaments in public rejoicings.

217. However, all the ancient French plays were not taken from Scripture, or the lives of saints. They had also *farces* and *mum-meries*. There is one, called the *farce* of *Pathelin*, which contains many pleasantries. To judge of it from the language, it must have been composed nearly about the time of *Lewis XII.* but there are passages in it that do not appear unworthy of the age of *Moliere*, nor of *Moliere* himself.

218. Under the reign of *Francis*, a taste for the Belles-Lettres became more diffusive; all the arts, all the sciences, revived. *Anthony*
G 2 *Forestier*,

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Forestier, and *James Bourgeois*, wrote comedies at that time, which probably are lost.

219. The first of all the French tragedies, is *Jodelle's Cleopatra*. It is a composition of great simplicity: No action, no representation, a mixture of high and low language in every part. There is always on the stage a chorus in the antique way, which ends every act, and throws out a meer jumble of moral sentences. This piece, which was acted at Paris before *Henry II.* met with prodigious applause. The same poet wrote likewise a tragedy of *Dido*, and two comedies.

220. The manners of those pieces were very licentious; and indeed the age of *Henry II.* despised alike both virtue and decorum.

221. *John Anthony de Baif*, and *John de la Peruse*, wrote also for the theatre. The latter produced a play *Of the Sinner justified by Faith*. *Robert Garnier* appeared under *Henry III.* Though his friends have extolled him as superior to the ancient Greek poets, he was very imperfect. He had more energy than *Jodelle*, but his pieces are not better constructed.

222. To *Garnier* succeeded *Alexander Hardy*, a Parisian, the most fertile author that ever studied, in France, for the stage. He wrote six hundred pieces; but, as soon as we read him, his fertility ceases to be marvellous.

Neither

Neither the versification, nor the disposition of the subjects, cost him much pains: The laws of decorum are quite neglected in them.

223. *Mairet* and *Rotrou*, also acquired reputation by their works; but all the above-mentioned poets were eclipsed as soon as the great *Corneille* appeared.

224. He was born in 1606, and his first piece was *Melite*, acted in 1625, which was planned from a little incident at a citizen's house at *Rouen*. The public found a new turn in this piece; they discerned an original spirit in it, and from thence expected to see the stage improved.

225. The six or seven first pieces of Mr. *Corneille*, seem to be unworthy of him, if we estimate them according to the talents of the author: But, considering the times he lived in, we perceive that none but an extraordinary genius could have composed them. *Melite*, when compared with *Hardy's* pieces, is admirable.

226. The stage flourished then under the patronage of the great cardinal *Richelieu*: His ministry at once gave birth to *Corneille*, *Rotrou*, *Mairet*, *Tristan*, *Scudery*, *Du Ryer*, besides several authors whose names are forgotten.

227. They began then to discover the theatrical rules, and particularly that of the

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three unities: But most authors still despised those rules, and even openly derided them.

228. In those days, tragi-comedy was pretty much in vogue, a medley of bad tragedy, with a kind of comedy which was no better. Most of the subjects were invented, and had a very romantic air: And, accordingly, it was customary to prefix to those pieces long explanatory arguments.

229. One of the greatest obligations we are under to Mr. *Corneille*, is his having purified the theatre: He was at first carried away by the established custom, but he opposed it immediately after; and since *Clitandre*, his second piece, we find nothing licentious in his works.

X 230. In *Medea*, he seemed to soar to the sub-
X limeft tragic height. But in the *Cid*, he shewed
himself greater and more powerful than he
had yet been. No theatrical piece ever had
so much success. It excited the jealousy of
cardinal *Richelieu*, who, in point of glory,
took such measures as seem most contradic-
tory to it. Being alarmed at Mr. *Corneille's*
high reputation, he spirited up several authors
against the *Cid*, and put himself at the head
of them. Mr. *de Scudery*, published his ob-
servations on that piece. The French aca-
demy afterwards gave theirs, which perform-
ance

ance was worthy of the great reputation of that rising society.

231. The same year that produced the *Cid*, also brought forth *Tristan's Mariamne*, another celebrated piece, which stood its ground on the theatre above a century. +

232. After having attained as far as the *Cid*, Mr. *Corneille* rose still higher in the *Horatii*; in fine, he went on to *Cinna* and *Polyeuctus*, above which there is nothing. H
Those pieces were of an unknown species, and a new theatre appeared. H
Then Mr. *Corneille*, by studying *Aristotle* and *Horace*, by his experience, by his reflections, and still more by his genius, found the true rules of the dramatic poem, and discovered the sources of the beautiful, which he afterwards laid open to all the world, in the excellent discourses prefixed to his plays. Hence it is that he is considered as the father of the French stage. He was the first that gave it a rational form, and at the same time he brought it to its highest degree of perfection.

233. The remainder of his pieces shew what must necessarily happen to a great man who continues writing to the end of his life. His beginnings are weak and imperfect, but already worthy of admiration, considering the age he lived in; afterwards he soars as high as his art can reach; in the end he grows languid,

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languid, sinks gradually, and is no longer like himself but by intervals.

234. As the most perfect human productions are not void of defects, we find in *Corneille's* best pieces, obsolete words, sometimes embarrassed speeches, and passages that savour of the declaimer.

235. He saw the taste of the age was turning entirely towards the most passionate love, and the least mixed with heroism; but he nobly disdained to comply with that new taste.

236. This leads us to his illustrious rival, *John Racine*, born in 1639, and educated by the recluses of *Port Royal*. He composed, for his first essay, the *Rival Brothers*, in 1664, which was followed by *Alexander*, in 1666.

X 237. He improved much farther in *Andromache*, in 1668; and *Britannicus*, two years
X after, silenced the critics, or at least completely triumphed over them.

X 238. *Berenice*, in 1671, was a kind of
X duel between *Corneille* and *Racine*. The victory was adjudged to the younger: Both court and city passionately upheld the *Berenice* of Mr. *Racine*, though critics pronounced this tragedy to be nothing but a series of elegies.

X 239. He composed *Bajazet*, in order to
X confound those who affirmed that he was only
an imitator of the ancients, from whom he borrowed

rowed his chief beauties; and, after all, they had nothing to offer in opposition to the applauses this piece received. His *Mithridates* was not less extolled, and soon after *Iphigenia* compleatly crowned the reputation of its author. + #

240. A devout turn of mind, together with some disgusts, induced Mr. *Racine* to renounce theatrical compositions: But the establishment of St. *Cyr*, gave him an opportunity to apply tragedy to sacred things. *Esther* is a very fine play, and *Athaliah* a real master-piece. The latter was acted in 1691, and Mr. *Racine* died in 1699. *Corneille* went before him, in 1684. X

241. This we think is a proper place for introducing the parallel of these two great poets, drawn by Mr. *de la Bruyere*, an author no less celebrated in his way. “ *Corneille*, “ says he, cannot be equalled in the places “ where he excels; he has then an original “ and inimitable character, but he is excen- “ tric. In some of his best pieces, there are “ inexcusable faults against morals, a declama- “ tory stile, that impedes the action and makes “ it languid, negligences in the versification “ and in the expression, which cannot be ac- “ counted for in so great a man. The most “ eminent qualification in him, is his genius, “ which was truly sublime. *Racine* is uniform, “ always

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“ always the same every where, both in the
 “ plan and conduct of his pieces, which are
 “ accurate, regular, drawn from good sense
 “ and nature ; in his versification he is
 “ correct, rich in his rhymes, elegant, nu-
 “ merous, harmonious. However, if it be
 “ allowable to make some comparison between
 “ them, and to characterize both by what
 “ is most peculiar to them, and by what usu-
 “ ally shines in their works, perhaps one
 “ one might thus speak of them. *Corneille*
 “ keeps us in subjection to his characters, and
 “ his ideas; *Racine* adapts himself to ours.
 “ The former paints men as they ought to
 “ be; the latter paints them as they are. In
 “ the first, there is more of what we admire,
 “ and of what we ought even to imitate; in
 “ the second, there is more of what we feel
 “ within ourselves. The one elevates, asto-
 “ nishes, subdues, and instructs; the other
 “ pleases, moves, touches, and penetrates.
 “ What is most grand; most imperious in
 “ reason, is handled by the former; what is
 “ most tender and most pleasing in the pas-
 “ sions, by the latter. In the one we find
 “ rules, precepts, maxims; in the other,
 “ taste and sentiment. The mind is more
 “ employed by *Corneille*’s pieces; by those of
 “ *Racine*, it is more agitated and affected.
 “ *Corneille* is more moral, *Racine* more na-
 “ tural.

"tural. It appears, the one imitated *Sophocles*,
 "and that the other owes more to *Euripides*."

242. From these two men united, an idea may be formed of tragic perfection, so as to include in this idea, the rule and measure of the merit of every tragedy, and they may be regarded as more or less perfect, according to their degrees of proximity with this idea.

243. *Corneille* and *Racine* have had no successors, properly so called; for though the tragic scene, since their time, has been enriched with several pieces in which there are great beauties, no poet has furnished a career similar to theirs. Those that may be placed immediately after them, are Messrs. *Crebillon* and *Voltaire*, both still living.

244. The tragedies of the first, almost form a species a-part, which may be called the terrible tragic, as that of *Corneille* is the sublime, and that of *Racine* the moving. The terror excited by *Rhadamiste*, *Electra*, &c. is carried to such a height, that the least degree farther would be shocking. Nor is Mr. *Crebillon*'s versification equal to that of his predecessors.

245. Most of Mr. *de Voltaire*'s tragedies, have met with a brilliant success, and this illustrious poet has handled almost all kinds of pieces; which will ever be an incontestible proof

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proof of the strength of his art, and the fineness of his genius.

246. *French* comedy begins with *Moliere*, who, like *Corneille* in regard to tragedy, at once created and carried it to its greatest perfection. He was born in 1620, his first piece, intitled *l'Etourdi*, (*the Blunderer*) was acted in 1653, and he rose as far as the *Misanthrope*, which appeared in 1666, and may be looked upon as the most perfect work in *French* comedy. The *Tartuffe*, the three first acts of which were represented in 1664, but which *Moliere* was not permitted to bring again upon the stage till 1669, is another piece as worthy of applause, for the singularity and boldness of the subject, as for the sagacity with which it is treated. *Moliere* died in 1673.

X 247. In surveying what *Moliere* did in the space of twenty years, we cannot but admire his happy fertility, the extent and the resources of his genius. He is perhaps still more worthy of praise, in the subjects he has taken from ancient and modern authors, or in the strokes he has borrowed from them, than in his own productions. Always superior to his models, he gave new life to what he had copied. The models disappeared, he became the original. In the same manner did *Plautus* and *Terence* imitate the *Grecians*.

248. The

248. The two Latin poets, more uniform in the choice of characters, and in the manner of painting them, represented only part of the general morals and manners of *Rome*. The *French* poet, not only exposed on the stage, the vices and follies common to all ages and countries; but he also painted them with strokes so well adapted to his nation, that his comedies may be considered as the history of the manners, modes, and taste of his age: An advantage that will ever distinguish *Moliere* from other comic authors.

249. Continually observing nature, and adapting to his art, all the attitudes, and all the expressions that characterize the passions, he copied the gesture, the tone, the language of all the sensations which man is susceptible of, in all conditions, and in all stations. He knew how to mix the satirical with the simple; the singular with the natural; which is the highest point of perfection in every species.

250. *Moliere* makes the most austere laugh, instructs every body, and disgusts no body; paints not only the manners of the age, but those of all ranks and conditions. He plays off the high and the low, the ridiculous and the vicious, yet none have a right to be offended at it.

251. He is charged with some blemishes, such as not being happy in unravelling his plots,

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plots, and sometimes running into too low comedy. With regard to the latter, we perceive, in perusing the history of his life, and of his pieces, that it was rather through necessity than taste that he stooped to this subaltern kind: And even in the comedies where it is prevalent, still there are many things very agreeable, and truly original.

252. *Moliere*, perhaps, has been still less equalled by those that came after him, than *Corneille* and *Racine*.

With him fell Comedy;—so rude the shock,
In vain we hope she'll re-assume the sock.

253. *Regnard* and *Des-Fontaines*, since *Moliere's* time, are those who have laboured with most success in the comic strain. *The Glorieux*, (Vain-glorious) and *the Married Philosopher*, of the latter, are pieces worthy of the author of the *Misanthrope* and *Tartuffe*.

254. The public relished the plays of Messrs. *de Boissy*, *La Chaussée*, and *Fagan*, which are of the mixed kind, mentioned Section 168.

255. Mr. *de Marivaux* also deserves to be distinguished: He has given to the two theatres, *French* and *Italian*, some comedies of a truly original turn; but, like all the other

works of this author, they are censured for a profusion of wit.

XV.

Of other THEATRES.

256. We shall not descant on these, so largely as we have done on the *French* theatre. That which we have just mentioned by the name of *Italian Theatre*, is a spectacle, or public shew, established in *France* since the year 1716. The comedians then invited from *Italy*, represented at first in their own tongue; but many persons who were attracted by their exhibitions, and did not understand *Italian*, relished this entertainment but very imperfectly: Upon which, the comedians were immediately advised to distribute, before the representations, printed arguments in *French*, briefly setting forth the subject of the piece. This succeeded with the public.

257. The *Italian* comedians having at length learned *French*, and qualified themselves for acting in this language, most of the pieces exhibited on their theatre, were printed; and this collection is in esteem. It is called the *Italian New Theatre*, in nine volumes 8vo. *Paris*, 1733-1736. Gerbardi's

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Italian Theatre, is rather a collection of scenes than pieces. There are some very witty things in them. This collection makes six volumes in 12mo. printed at *Amsterdam*, in 1701.

258. The *English*, as well as the *Spaniards*, had already a stage, whilst the *French* used nothing but trestles. *Lopez de Vega*, was worth many dramatic poets to *Spain*, as he composed no less than two thousand pieces.

259. *Shakespear* flourished about the same time in *England*. He created the *English* stage; his genius was surprizingly vigorous and fertile, natural and sublime; without the least spark of good taste, and without any knowledge of rules. The merit of this author, has been of great prejudice to the *English* theatre, by bringing into repute and perpetuating his defects.

260. Mr. *Addison* is the first *Englishman* that composed a rational tragedy; which is his *Cato*. It is also written, from the beginning to the end, with that masculine and energetic elegance, which *Corneille* had given a model of in *France*: Yet, all the beauties to be met with therein, cannot make it a fine tragedy, because most of the rules of this kind of drama, are not observed in it. In most other *English* tragedies, the heroes are bombastick, and the heroines extravagant. The stile of their comedies is more natural; but this

H. Smith, Ben Jonson - Beaumont
Dryden - Otway - Southern - Rowe.

X

this nature often appears to be that of a debauchee, rather than of a well-bred modest man.

261. Of all the *English* writers, *Congreve* has carried the glory of comedy highest. He wrote but few pieces, but they are all excellent in their kind. The rules of the theatre, are rigorously observed in them. They abound with characters exquisitely shaded and heightened, and every where they speak like civilized, well-bred people. *Congreve's* pieces are the most witty, and the most regular; those of *Vanbrugh* are the gayest, and those of *Wycherley* the most nervous.

262. The Marquis *Maffei's Merope*, holds in *Italy*, the same rank as *Addison's Cato* in *England*. The most celebrated poet that nation has at present, is Mr. *Matastasio*, who unites the splendor of the lyric scene with the beauties of tragic poetry.

263. The first comedy acted in *Germany*, in 1497, was written by the famous *Reuchlin*. The *German* theatre does not yet exist, or at least it has but just received its birth, as we may be convinced of, by casting an eye on the ample list of all the dramatic pieces printed in *Germany*, from the year 1500, to the present time, which may be seen in the preface to the *German Theatre*, published by professor *Gasschell*. For which we may consult the

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11th chapter of the work intitl'd, *The Progress of the Germans in the Sciences, Belles-Lettres, and Arts, &c.* at Amsterdam, 1752, in 12mo.

XVI.

Of OPERAS.

264. The *Opera*, of which we have already given a definition in Sect. 161, 162. is an exhibition equally fantastical and magnificent, where the eye and the ear receive more satisfaction than the mind, where subjection to music renders the most ridiculous faults necessary, where Ariettas are sung in the destruction of cities, and dances are performed round a tomb; where we see palaces erected and demolished, in the twinkling of an eye, gods, dæmons, magicians, delusions, monsters, &c.

265. Such extravagancies are tolerated; they are even liked, because we are there in a fairy land; and provided there be shew in it, with fine dancing, fine music, and a few interesting scenes, we are contented. It would be as ridiculous to require unity of action in an opera, as to introduce dances and dæmons in a tragedy.

266. However, though operas are excused from adhering to the three principal dramatic rules,

rules, the best are those in which they are least infringed: They are, however, to be met with in many, so natural are they, and so much do they serve to interest the spectator.

267. With great reason more perfection is required in a tragedy than in an opera; because in the former, the attention is not divided; the pleasure does not depend on a decoration or a dance, but it is the mind alone that must be pleased.

XVII.

OF PARODIES.

268. The principal species of parody, is a work in verse, composed on a whole piece, or on a considerable part of a known piece of poetry, which is diverted to another subject and another sense, by changing some expressions.

269. In the hands of a critic, parody becomes a torch which enables us to see the defects of an author who has surreptitiously obtained admiration. Examples of it occur in antiquity, and they are nearly in the taste of the parodies now given on the theatres.

270. *Menage* parodied a sonnet of *Malherbe*, and *Despreaux*, with some of his friends, whole scenes

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scenes of the *Cid*, in the *Chapelain Decoiffé*. (The Chaplain Uncoiffed). There are in four volumes 8vo. printed at Paris in 1738, *The Parodies of the Italian new Theatre*, some of which are very ingenious.

271. The Abbé Sallier, has given a very good dissertation on the Origin and the Characteristic of Parody, in the seventh tome of the *History of the Royal Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres*, page 398, of the Paris edition.

XVIII.

Of VERSIFICATION IN PROSE.

272. This is a kind of paradox, maintained by Mr. de la Motte, who, after having written nothing all his life but verses, or works in prose formed on his verses, even wrote against his own art, and has treated it with extreme contempt.

273. He pretends that rhyme is a barbarous practice, of late invention. Yet all nations, excepting the *Greeks* and the ancient *Romans*, made use of rhyme, and still write in rhyme. The return of the same sounds is so natural to the ear, that we have found rhyme established among savages, as it is at Rome, Paris, London, and Madrid. In Montaigne,

taigne, there is a song in *American* rhymes, translated into *French*; and in the *Spectator*, a translation of a *Lapland* ode in rhyme, which is replete with fine sentiments. ✓

274. Either in rhyme, or in cadenced syllables, poetry has been and ever will be cultivated by all nations. No person can read the finest verses, turned into prose; and from this alone, we have a right to infer the extraordinary merit of poetry.

275. *French* poetry is obliged to adhere to rhyme; because the genius of the language is perspicuity and elegance, which interdicts all licentiousness in the versification, which ought to go on like prose, in the precise order of the ideas. Therefore this poetry stands essentially in need of the return of the same sounds, that it may not be confounded with prose.

276. The prerogatives of harmony cannot be better expressed than Mr. *de la Faye* has done, in an ode against Mr. *de la Motte's* system, and particularly in this so justly admired strophe.

From the same rigorous constraint,

Which seems the mind to tie,

New strength it gains, becomes not faint,

But takes a flight more high.

Thus

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Thus when the water, in its course,
Is close press'd any where,
It rises with redoubled force,
And springs into the air:
So from those *rules* which rigid seem,
Good verses rise to more esteem.

XIX.

Of APOLOGUE, or FABLE.

277. The *Apologue*, properly speaking, is the entertainment of children, and differs from others but in the minuteness and innocence of the actors. On this little theatre we see no *Alexanders*; nor *Cæsars*; the fly and the ant appear on it, act the parts of men, in their manner, and exhibit a play equally pure and instructive.

278. The inventors of the *Apologue*, judged they would not be censured for giving speech and thoughts, at first to animals, who, having nearly the same organs that we have, seem perhaps mute to us, only because we do not understand their language; afterwards to trees, which, as they have life, easily obtained sentiment from poets; and lastly, to every thing that moves or exists in the universe.

279. All

279. All the rules of the *Apologue*, are contained in those of the *Epopœa* and the *Drama*. Change but the names, the swelling frog is a citizen turned esquire; or, if you please, Cæsar, whose ambition proves his ruin; or the first man, who was degraded for having aspired to be like unto God.

280. An *Apologue*, like other poems, must have an action. This action must be one, and interesting; have a beginning, a middle, and an end; consequently a prologue, a plot, and an unravelling; a place for the scenes; some actors, at least two, or something that may stand instead of a second. These actors are to have a character established, maintained consistently, and evinced by their speeches and manners; and all this in imitation of human nature, of which animals are made the copiers, and act the parts of men, according to a certain analogy of characters.

281. The *Apologue* is not dramatic; we do not there see a wolf carrying off a lamb; 'tis only the recital of an allegorical action, commonly attributed to animals.

282. The essential qualities of a recital are brevity, perspicuity, and probability. Brevity requires, that things be not too far fetched, and that the recital be finished where it ought to end. This does not exclude little details, when they may have a good effect.

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The recital is perspicuous, when each circumstance is rightly placed, well timed, and the terms and the turns are proper, just, simple, without equivocation, without disorder. In fine, probability results from a conjunction of the strictures usually found in truth, so that the time, the occasion, the facility, the place, the disposition of the actors, and their characters, seem to lead to the actions; and that the whole be painted in a manner consistent with nature, and the ideas of those to whom we speak.

283. These three qualities are essential in all recitals, of whatever kind they may be. But, when our principal view is to please, there must be a fourth quality; and that is, to embellish with ornaments suitable to the subject.

284. These ornaments consist, 1. In the imagery, the descriptions, the portraits of places, persons, and attitudes, 2. In the thoughts, when they are striking by their extreme solidity, by their singularity, or by their smartness; 3. In the allusions, when we introduce some strokes, that make either a serious, or a burlesque figure, with what is recited; 4. In the turns, which ought to be lively and sharp; and, 5. In the expressions, which are sometimes bold, sometimes copious, sometimes brilliant.

285. The

285. The action of fable must be single, just, natural, and of a certain extent. Single, means that all its parts center in one point; and this, in the *Apologue*, is the moral. Just, is to signify directly, and with precision, what we intend to teach. Natural, means that it be founded in nature, or at least on received opinion. Lastly, it must have a certain extent, so that we may easily discern in it a beginning, a middle, and an end.

286. The truth resulting from the allegorical recital in *Apologues*, is called the *moral*. It must be clear, concise, and interesting; there must be no metaphysics, no laboured periods, nor too trivial truths in it.

287. The moral may be placed before and after the tale, according as taste requires or permits. In both cases the reader's mind is exercised, in combining each passage of the recital with truth; but in the second, he has the additional pleasure of guessing.

288. Fables are divided into three kinds; the *rational*, whose personages have the use of reason; the *moral*, wherein the persons borrow the manners of men, without having the soul, which is the principle of it; and the *mixt*, where a rational being acts with another not endowed with reason.

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289. The style of fables must be simple, familiar, chearful, graceful, natural, and especially artless. This last quality consists in the choice of certain simple expressions, replete with an easy sweetness, which seem to arise of themselves, rather than to be chosen; in such compositions as are made, as it were, by chance; and in certain youthful turns, which yet retain an air of the old mode.

290. It is impossible to tell at what time the *Apologue* had its origin. However, the use of it is certainly very ancient, and mankind, without corresponding together, alike employed it in different parts of the world.

291. In the early ages, men having but a rude unpolished language, too poor to furnish them with all the expressions whose want they felt, they had recourse, as far as they could, to some image, or comparison. Now, comparison is allied to allegory, and allegory is the same thing as *Apologue*.

292. It was natural to employ animals to represent men. They resemble us in several respects. When we lend them reason and speech, we listen to them without partiality, because they are not men. As they judge us without prejudice, we receive their decision without spurning at it. The artifice is not subtil,

subtil, and yet men suffer themselves to be caught by it.

XX.

Of the most celebrated FABULISTS.

293. *Æsop*, a *Phrygian*, is the first in this list. His history, such as *Plamudes* has given it, is a meer romance: But the great reputation he has enjoyed in all times and in all places, is extremely real.

294. Perspicuity and precision, constitute the character and merit of *Æsop's* Fables. Without despising ornaments, he prefers strength and clearness to them, and intends that the truth he presents be luminous of itself, so as to strike the least attentive minds: And, indeed, what few fables of his are left, are truly excellent.

295. *Phadrus*, *Augustus's* freed man, thought fable was a kind of composition susceptible of graces and embellishments. In the collection he has left us, we discern the witty, delicate, graceful, polished man, and one who endeavours to be so. He does not content himself with reciting, he paints, and frequently with one single stroke. His expressions are well chosen, his thoughts judiciously

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ously arranged, and his versification carefully laboured.

296. Since *Phædrus*, there are but few authors that have run the same race. *Avienus*, about the end of the last century, endeavoured to make fables in elegiac verse; but he has neither the correctness of the Greek fabulist, nor the elegance of the Latin one.

297. To some critics, *Æsop's* simplicity appeared dry and irksome; and the elegance of *Phædrus* had not that easy softness, that graceful tenderness, which pleases the fancy, and commands attention. A man was still wanting, expressly formed by nature, to add this part to the *Apologue*, and render it at the same time simple, elegant, and genuine.

298. A man of this character was the celebrated *John de la Fontaine*. "Never, says the Abbé Olivet, never was any man more simple, but it was that ingenuous simplicity, which is the portion of infancy, or, more properly speaking, he was a child all his life. A child is ingenuous, credulous, ductile, without ambition, without gall. He is not concerned about riches; he is not capable of sticking long to one and the same object. He is in search of pleasure only, or rather amusement: And as to his manners, he suffers himself to be guided by a glimmering light, that partly discovers
"to

Gay - Dryden

x

“to him the law of nature. This in every
 “stroke is the character of Mr. *de la Fon-*
 “*taine.*”

299. This fabulist raised the *Apologue* to its highest perfection. Those who attempted to surpass him, have not been able to reach him, though they had great talents. The least of his fables have a turn in them that will always baffle those who were not born like him.

300. The fables of Mr. *de la Motte*, is perhaps a work worse treated by critics than any other ever has been: Yet there is in all of them sense and wit, and several are very estimable. *La Fontaine* did not trouble his head about inventing the subject; he contented himself with giving his own turn to those we had already. Mr. *de la Motte*, having so dangerous a rival to contend with, was willing in the first place, secure to himself the merit of invention: The substance belongs to him as well as the form.

301. Among the fabulists of our days, we may distinguish Mr. *Richer*, whose collection is above the middling rank; and the Abbé *Aubert*, who is actually running in the same career with success.

XXI.

OF PASTORAL POETRY.

302. Pastoral poetry, is an imitation of rural life, represented with all its possible charms. In this kind of composition, it is necessary to shew rural life itself, and only adorn it with such graces as it is capable of receiving.

303. The name of *Eclogue* is also given to pastoral pieces, from a Greek word that signifies a collection of choice pieces, no matter of what kind. This name has since been appropriated to little poems on rural life.

304. The name *Idyllium* has also been given to them, from another Greek word, which signifies a little image, a painting in the graceful and soft way. The difference between an *Idyllium* and an *Eclogue*, is very trifling: There is more action and emotion in the latter, and more imagery and sentiment in the former.

305. The tranquility of rural life, which is the subject of an *Eclogue*, contains a proper number of incidents, perfect freedom, and pleasing gaiety. It admits of moderate passions,

sions, that may produce complaints, songs, poetical contests, and interesting recitals.

306. Pastorals, properly speaking, are a description of the golden age, adapted to the capacities of men, and cleared of all the hyperbolical marvellous which poets had croud-
ed into it.

307. All that happens in the country, is not worthy of a place in the *Eclogue*. We must take in no more of it than what is of a nature to please or affect us.

308. Pastoral poetry may not only be presented under the form of recital, but also under all the forms that belong to poetry. Shepherds may have epic poems, tragedies, comedies, operas, elegies, eclogues, idyllia, epigrams, inscriptions, allegories, funeral songs, &c.

309. Shepherds ought to be delicate and ingenuous; that is to say, in all their proceedings, and in all their speeches, there must be nothing rude and disagreeable, nor any thing too subtil and far-fetched. They must display discernment, address, and even wit, provided it be natural. They must be all morally as well as poetically good.

310. Hence indeed it happens, that their characters are nearly the same in the main, but yet they remain susceptible of a great variety. From the mere taste for tranquility
and

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and innocent pleasures, may be struck out all the passions, and they may be diversified according to ages, sexes, places, events, &c.

311. The style of shepherds should, 1. Be simple, i. e. that common expressions be used without affectation, without preparation, without an apparent design of pleasing; 2. It must be gentle, have a certain softness, mixed with delicacy, either in the thoughts, the turns, or the words; 3. Artless; (See Sect. 289.) 4. Be graceful in descriptions; 5. Have turns of phrase, and comparisons, taken from objects familiar to shepherds; 6. Frequent repetitions and circumstantial descriptions must be used; 7. Every thing, in short, must be avoided that savours of study and application.

312. The *Eclogue* may however sometimes soar. Shepherds, may if we please, have a bold imagination, and discourse of the sublimest things; but it must always be with a kind of timidity and simplicity. These qualities, with ease and gaiety, form the essential characteristic of pastoral poetry.

313. The *Eclogue* must be almost as old as the world; but the origin of it is fixed in the days of the first pastoral poet whose works had any reputation.

XXII

Of the principal AUTHORS in
PASTORAL.

314. The poet, above hinted at, is *Theocritus*, who lived about 270 years before *Christ*. In his *Idyllia*, he has painted nature genuine and graceful. We find in them abundance of passages from which may be formed the finest characters in pastoral. Some of them might have been more delicate; but in most there is a sweetness, an ease, to which none of his successors could attain.

315. *Moschus* and *Bion*, appeared some time after *Theocritus*. From the small number of pieces that remain of the former, it appears that he has added to the *Eclogue*, a certain art which it had not before, but it was a loser in point of simplicity. *Bion* went farther; his *Idyllia* are still more embellished; we discover every where an endeavour, and sometimes an affectation, to please.

316. Comparing then the characters of these three poets, it may be said, that *Theocritus* painted simple, and sometimes negligent, nature; that *Moschus* displayed her with art; and that *Bion* set her off with ornaments.

317. *Virgil*

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317. *Virgil* is the only poet that excelled in this kind. He made *Theocritus* his model, and stuck so close to him, that his *Eclogues* are scarce any thing but imitations of the *Greek* poet. They are the same subjects, the same turns, and frequently the same thoughts.

318. *Horace*, in drawing the character of *Virgil's Eclogues* in these verses,

----- (*molle atque facetum*

Virgilio annuerunt gaudentes rure Camænae.

The Muses, whom sweet rural Pastimes please,

Bestow'd on *Virgil* Elegance and Ease.)

has given the perfect idea of the *Eclogue*, i. e. the rule by which all works may be try'd that bear this name. Ease and elegance being essential qualities, the degree of their perfection consists in their having more or less of each, or only of one of these qualities; and the summit of perfection would be to bring them both to the highest point.

319. *Calphurnius*, and *Nemesianus*, distinguished themselves in pastoral poetry, under the reign of *Dioclesian*. They have now and then some graceful images and verses happily turned; but they are deficient in that pastoral rapture which inspired the muse of *Theocritus*, and in that ease which is the soul of *Eclogue*.

320. The

320. The *Italians* have given so new a character to the *Eclogue*, that it no longer appears among them like what it should be. It sparkles with witticisms, abounds with quibbles, and is crowded with antitheses. But, notwithstanding all this, from the particular advantage of the *Italian* language, there is an acknowledged sweetness in their *Eclogues*, and something of that ease which appertains to pastoral.

321. *Ronsard's Eclogues* don't deserve to be mentioned: At least we may confine ourselves to what *Despreaux* has said of them.

Ronsard continues still the rural lay,
But ever tunes it in the *Gothic* way:
Without respect to sense, he never fails,
To change his swains to clowns, his
nymphs to Abigails.

322. *Honorat de Buil*, Marquis de *Racan*, a disciple of *Malherbe*, restored in *France* the glory of the *Eclogue*. His genius was fertile and easy, his stile simple and delicate; consequently he wanted nothing to make him a shepherd. Accordingly, we find again in him the spirit of *Theocritus* and *Virgil*; and there are some parts which may be compared to what is most delicate in these two poets.

323. Mr.

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322. Mr. *de Segrain*, is looked upon as the most excellent model we have in pastoral poetry.

In *Segrain's Eclogues*, lo, the forests dance.

324. Madam *Deshoulières* yields to none in this kind of composition. As ingenuous as *Theocritus*, as delicate as *Virgil*, and as witty as *Bion*; she has of all these qualities made a happy mixture, which might perhaps have got the prize adjudged to her, had the groundwork of her subjects been more variegated; but they all seem to proceed from a certain mournfulness, which gives them a counterfeit air of elegy.

325. The shepherds of Mr. *de Fontenelle* are courtiers, who, in taking up the crook and the scrip, have not assumed the rural stile and the pastoral spirit. They recite delicate and polite things very ingeniously; but all calculated for the mind, and nothing for the heart. So that it may be said, the *Eclogues* of this author belong to this species, only from the name he has given them.

XXIII.

OF LYRIC POETRY.

326. The other species of poetry which we have hitherto treated of, have actions for their

their principal object: *Lyric Poetry* is entirely dedicated to sentiment; which is its matter, its essential object. Sometimes it is guided by sentiment, and then it slowly insinuates itself, and warms without noise; sometimes it is hurried away by sentiment; and then it springs and soars with fiery impetuosity.

327. *Lyric Poetry* is so called, because it is generally designed to be sung. In former days they did in effect sing it, and the lyre accompanied the voices. The word *Ode* has the same origin. It signifies *Song* or *Hymn*.

328. *Lyric Poetry* and music must therefore have an intimate connection together, founded in the nature of things; since both are to express the same objects. According to which, music being an expression of the sentiments of the heart by inarticulate sounds, Musical or *Lyric Poetry*, must be the expression of sentiments by articulate sounds or words.

329. After having defined *Lyric Poetry* to be that which expresses sentiment, if we add to it a form of versification that may be sung, it will have every thing it wants in order to be perfect.

330. From thence proceed the rules of this kind of poetry, as well as its privileges. 'Tis this that authorizes its bold beginnings, passionate expressions and excursions. 'Tis from

K

thence

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thence it derives that sublime which is peculiar to it, and that enthusiasm which approximates it to divinity.

331. The enthusiasm of artists in general is a lively sentiment, produced by a bright idea, with which the artist himself is struck. The poetical enthusiasm, or rapture, is so called, because a soul possessed with it, is entirely taken up with the object that inspires it. The enthusiasm of the *Lyric Poet* is sometimes sublime, sometimes easy and simple, but more frequently keeps in a certain medium between sublimity and ease.

332. The *sublime* in general, is every thing that exalts us above what we were, and at the same time makes us sensible of that elevation. Sublime style which consists in a series of noble ideas, nobly expressed, is out of the question here: That which we speak of is like a sudden flash, which enlightens, or enflames.

333. We distinguish two sorts of sublimity; that of imagery, and that of sentiment. Images are sublime, when they raise our mind above all the ideas of grandeur it could possibly have. Sentiments are sublime, when they seem to be almost above the condition of human nature.

334. We must not confound sublimity of sentiment with vivacity of sentiment. A sentiment

timent may be extremely vivacious without being sublime; and on the contrary, the sublime sentiment is void of vivacity, because a great soul is not moved at what affects ordinary minds.

335. This is the generation of the lyrical sublime. A great object strikes the poet: His imagination soars and takes flame: It produces lively sentiments, which in their turn act upon the imagination, and further increase its fire. Hence arise the greatest efforts to express the situation of the soul: Hence the rich, nervous, bold periods, the extraordinary figures, and the singular turns. Such is the sublime that belongs to the *Ode*, the sublimity of the images, that which produces the lively sentiment, and which the sentiment re-produces and augments in its turn.

336. Sublimity of sentiment has no passions, no excessive flights, strong images, nor daring expressions; but all is tranquil and simple. It exists not in the ode, because it is usually connected with some action, and in odes there is no action. 'Tis in the drama we chiefly find it. *Corneille* abounds with it.

337. It is easy to form an idea of the enthusiasm which preserves the medium between sublimity and ease. 'Tis that which produces what is called the sublime stile, *i. e.* a chain of elevated thoughts, nervous and rich

expressions, harmonious sounds, connected and bold turns, brilliant figures, and the poetical rapture uniformly and constantly sustained.

338. The *beginning* of the ode is bold; because, when the poet takes his lyre in hand, we suppose him strongly impressed with the objects he represents to himself. His imagination fires, and springs away with impetuosity; consequently it is hardly possible for an ode to soar higher than its beginning: But when the poet, if he has taste, ought to stop precisely at the place where it begins to sink.

339. *Excursions* in odes, are a sort of vacuity between two ideas that have no immediate connection. The mind's natural activity becomes incomparably greater when the soul is heated by passion: This transport hurries away the thoughts with precipitation. And as it is impossible to express them all, the poet seizes only the most remarkable, and delivering them in the same order as they are placed in his mind, without expressing those that served to combine them, they appear detached from the subject. But a sensible reader, when he has entered into the spirit of the poet, easily fills up these vacuities.

340. Excursions or flights, are allowable only in subjects that admit of strong passions, because they are the effect of a troubled mind,

mind, and anxiety is occasioned only by important objects.

341. *Digressions* are sallies made by the poet's mind on other subjects bordering on that which he is handling, allured either by the beauty of the matter, or obliged by the sterility of his subject, to seek elsewhere for something to enrich it.

342. There are two sorts of digressions; the one consists in common-place observations, and general truths, often susceptible of the greatest poetical beauties: The other in passages of history or fable, which the poet employs to prove what he has in view.

343. Poetical *Irregularity* consists in presenting objects abruptly, without any preparation, or placing them in such order as is not natural to them. This is an irregularity of *things*. There is also a disorder of *words*, from whence certain turns arise, which, without being forced, appear extraordinary and irregular.

344. In general, excursions, digressions, and irregularity, should serve only to variegate, animate, and enrich the subject. If they render it obscure, crowd and perplex it, they are bad.

345. Two consequences result from the preceding observations. 1. An ode ought to be but of a moderate length, agreeable to

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the observation of *Cicero*; *Animorum incendia celeriter restinguuntur*. 2. Unity of sentiment must prevail in it, as unity of action does in the epopea and the drama.

346. There are four kinds of odes. 1. The *Sacred Ode*, which is a sort of hymn or canticle, as those of *Moses* and the prophets, and the psalms of *David*. 2. *Heroic Odes*, so called from their being devoted to the glory of heroes. 3. *Moral*, or philosophical *Odes*, where the poet, stricken with the charms of virtue, or the deformity of vice, gives a loose to the sentiments of love or hatred, which those objects produce in him. 4. *Anacreontic Odes*, which are the expressions of a joyous moment, and spring up in the midst of pleasures, as most of the *French* songs do.

347. The *Form* of odes is different, according to the taste of the people where they are in use. The *French* have two sorts of them: The first are those that retain the generical name, and are not sung; the others are called *Cantatas*, because they are composed for singing.

348. In the first kind, the arrangements and the number of verses is nearly at the option and disposition of the poet: But, the first strophe being once settled, it serves for a rule to all the rest. In *Cantatas* we distinguish two parts, the *Recitative* and the *Air*. The
Recitative

Recitative begins, the Air follows: Then another Recitative, after that another Air. The Recitative presents the object to the mind, the Air expresses the sensation, which the sight of the object should excite. This produces two sorts of music, and also two sorts of poetry. The Recitative is slower and more simple; the air is brisker and more animated.

349. It may be asked, why music lying wholly in sentiment, there is a species of lyric poetry which melts by its sweetness, and another kind that, on the contrary, requires all the force and energy imaginable? We answer, that the easy and simple sentiment, expressed by music, does not exclude nervous expression; on the contrary, it conduces to it. When a sentiment is in its greatest vivacity, it casts off vulgar expression; it speaks by things rather than words, because the latter are too feeble for it. Simplicity excludes nothing but what is too laboured, too studied, or has only an historical dryness, as also witticisms, epigrams, subtile transitions, systematical expressions. Accordingly, we find none of them in any truly lyric piece: But the most energetical expressions may and ought to be found therein.

350. If *Quinault's* poetry, though lyric, is so easy and sweet, 'tis 1. That this poet has

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has fung of nothing but diversions, pleasures, and love, the foundation of which is sloth and indolence; 2. That, in the works of *Quinault*, the greatest part is in Recitativo.

351. In tracing the origin of lyric poetry, it may be said that the first exclamation of man, coming out of the Creator's hands, was a lyrical expression. Having afterwards discerned with more leisure and less confusion the blessings heaped on him, and the wonders which surrounded him, he wished to have the whole universe concur with him in paying the tribute of glory he owed to the sovereign benefactor.

352. As mankind multiplied, grateful nations immortalized the benefits of God by songs, which by pious tradition were handed down to posterity. Though the *Heathens* were mistaken in the object of their worship, still they had, in the foundation of their festivals, the same principle as the worshippers of the true God.

353. The beneficent gods were at first the natural object of lyric poetry: Heroes, believed to be children of the gods, had afterwards naturally a share in this kind of tribute: And this is what produced the first poems of the principal lyric authors, whose characters we are now proceeding to draw.

XXIV.

Of the most celebrated LYRIC
POETS.

354. The name of *Pindar* is rather the name of enthusiasm itself, than that of a poet. *Horace* speaks of *Pindar* in such strains of admiration, as prove the high opinion he had of him.

355. *Pindar* was born at *Thebes*, in *Beotia*, 500 years before *Jesus Christ*. When *Alexander* destroyed that city, he ordered the house in which this poet had dwelt, to be spared.

356. Several reasons concur to make *Pindar's* odes appear obscure and intricate. 1. The very grandeur of the ideas they contain. 2. The boldness of the turns. 3. The novelty of the words, which he often coins for the very place wherein he uses them. 4. In fine, the erudition with which he abounds; an erudition out of the common way, drawn from the particular history of certain families, and certain cities, which had but little share in the known revolutions of ancient history.

357. *Pindar* has much fewer excursions than is commonly thought. The glory of the heroes whom he celebrated, was not peculiar

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cular to the conquering hero: It belonged by full right to his family, and still more to the place of which he was a citizen. So that when *Pindar* treated of subjects, in appearance foreign to that of his ode, it was not so much an excursion of the poet, as the effect of art.

358. There is in *Boileau's* works, the dispute between him and Mr. *Perrault*, about *Pindar's* odes. All the advantage remained with the former, and the glory of the lyric Greek poet was raised above all the attempts made to tarnish it.

359. The names of some lyric authors, anterior to *Pindar*, are famous, but the works of most of them are lost. *Alcman* was in high repute at *Lacedemon*, and *Stesichorus* in *Sicily*. *Sappho* was an honour to her sex, and gave her name to the *Sapphic* verse, which she invented. She was born in the *Isle of Lesbos*; as was also *Alcaeus*, who flourished in the same age, and was the inventor of the *Alcaic* verse, which is the most majestic of the lyric kind.

X 360. *Anacreon*, of *Teos*, a city in *Ionia*, had made himself famous several centuries before. He was cotemporary with *Cyrus*, and died in 6th Olympiad, aged 83. We have a pretty good number of his pieces left, which all breathe nothing but pleasure and amusement. They are short; and most frequently contain nothing

nothing but a graceful sentiment, a pleasing idea, a delicate compliment allegorically turned: Their graces are simple, ingenuous, negligent.

361. *Anacréon's* pieces are but very imperfectly rendered in the verse translations given of them by Messrs. *de la Fosse* and *de Longepierre*. Madam *Dacier's* translation, though in prose, comes nearer to the original.

362. *Horace*, the first and the only Latin poet that perfectly succeeded in the ode, had thoroughly studied all the Greek lyric writers; and, according to the subjects, he has all their great qualities; except that his compositions sometimes savour of art, and that he is intent upon equalling his models.

363. We may apply to *Horace's* lyric strains what he himself has said of destiny, which he compares to a river, that sometimes, gentle between its banks, runs on silently towards the sea; and sometimes, when torrents have swelled its stream, carries away rocks, trees, herds and houses, making distant forests and mountains resound with the roaring of its waters.

364. *Malherbe* is the first in France that produced the ode in its perfection. The preceding lyrists had genius and fire enough; but they made a hotch-potch of Latinisms and Hellenisms, crude and harsh, which they intermixed

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termixed with witticisms, puns, and *rodo-
montades*. *Malherbe* reduced every thing to
the rules of duty; he was for speaking plain-
ly, correctly, and decently; he made the
verification graceful; in short, he was the
father of good taste in our poetry; and his
laws, derived from good sense and nature,
still serve for rules, as *Despreaux* has observed,
even to the authors of our days.

365. *Ruan* also wrote some odes, the form
of which is pleasant, flowing, and easy: Na-
ture alone was his guide; but the materials
are not so well combined, as in *Malherbe's*
odes: And as he did not study the sources,
there is not always in the chief part enough of
that weight which gives consistency.

366. In our days arose the celebrated
Roussau, who, by the energy of his stile,
the beauty of his verification, the vigour of
his thoughts, has almost made us forget the
ancients, who are forsaken especially by those
whose delicacy cannot endure antiquated
words. *Roussau* is admirable in his verifica-
tion; his stile is sublime, and perfectly well
sustained; his thoughts are well connected;
he carries on his strain with the same force
from the beginning to the end.

377. Yet he is not without faults, even in
his best pieces; for those of his later years
are much inferior to the others. He has not
always

always enough of that flexibility, that suppleness, which gives a grace, and makes the members play with ease. We cannot pass a more solid judgment on *Rousseau's* poetry than the Duke de Nivernois has done in an excellent piece of criticism of his composing, which is inserted in several collections *.

368. Sacred lyric is infinitely above all the prophane compositions of this kind. *David* may stand us in stead of the Greeks and all the Latins. 'Tis in his Psalms that we find the ideal beauty of the ode realized: The sublime, the easy, the vehement, every thing, is there in the highest perfection. What would it be, if we could perfectly relish it, and in the original tongue, which of all languages is the most energetical.

XXV.

OF ELEGY.

369. *Elegy* is devoted to the emotions of the heart, and may be considered as dependent on the ode. These two kinds of poetry have the same matter, but with this difference only, that the ode extends to sentiments of all kinds

* It is inserted in the *Bee of Parnassus*, Tome IV. Page 277, &c.

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and all degrees, whereas *Elegy* is confined to tender sensations.

370. Among the Latins, the name of *Elegy* related to the form of the poem as well as to the subject matter. They called an *Elegiac poem*, that which was in hexameter and pentameter verses intermixed. With us, as there is no particular form for this species of poetry, it is distinguished only by the nature of the sensation expressed in it, and this sensation is confined to grief.

371. *Elegy* must have its hair disheveled, it must be negligent, in mourning garments, sorrowful and lamenting. It is difficult enough to meet with good elegies in *French*: Most of them are either insipid and languid, or in a style too laboured and affected. *Madam Deshoulieres* and the Countess *de la Suze*, hold the first rank in this species of poetry.

372. Of the Greek Elegies we have none left but that in the *Andromache* of *Euripides*: But we still have those of *Tibullus*, *Propertius*, and *Ovid*, who were famous in this way among the Latins. *Tibullus* is natural, easy, and elegant. *Propertius* is more stiff, or even a little harsh, because he is too learned. As to *Ovid*, we know his fault is having too much wit, and supposing his reader has too little. He says all that can be said, and therefore says too much.

XXVI.

Of Didactic Poetry.

373. The poetry which we have hitherto seen reigning in fiction, as in its own domain, changes the object in *Didactic Poetry*. Its design is to instruct, to trace the laws of reason and good sense, to guide the arts, to adorn and embellish truth, without encroaching in the least upon its prerogative.

374. This composition is a kind of usurpation made by poetry on prose, whose natural scope is instruction; for, as prose is more free in its expressions and turns, and is not fettered by poetical harmony, it can more easily deliver ideas clearly, and consequently convey them, just as they are, to the minds of those we instruct.

375. Men who were possessed both of knowledge and the talent of versification, attempted to cloathe with poetical expressions and graces, matters purely doctrinal. Hence proceeded *Hesiod's Tracts on Husbandry*, the *Sentences of Theogenes*, the *Theraupentic of Nicander*, *Oppian's Hunting and Fishing*, *Lucretius's poem on Nature*, *Virgil's Georgics*, &c.

376. In all these works there is nothing poetical but the form: Fiction does not fur-

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nish the matter, 'tis truth itself that speaks.
The pure Didactic is *Truth thrown into Verse*.
The pure Poetic is *Fiction cloathed in Verse*.

377. Between these two extremes, there are abundance of mediums, in which fiction and truth are blended, and mutually assist each other; and the works included in them are either poetical, or didactical, more or less, according as they contain more or less fiction or truth.

378. There are as many species of *Didactic Poetry*, as there are different kinds of truth.

379. We may entitle those *Historical Poems* which relate nothing but real actions and events, just as they happened in the natural course, without arranging their parts according to the rules of art, and without rising higher than the natural causes. Such are the fifty books of *Nonnus* on the life and exploits of *Bacchus*, *Lucan's Pharsalia*, *Silius Italicus's Punic War*, and some others.

380. *Philosophical Poems* are those which consist in establishing principles, either physical, moral, or metaphysical. In these, the authors quote authorities and examples, and draw consequences. Such are *Lucretius's* poem, *Cardinal Polignac's Anti-Lucretius*, *Pope's Essay on Man*, &c.

381. In fine, we simply call *Didactic Poems* those that contain nothing but observations relative

relative to practice, precepts for regulating some operation whose success is to be secured by precautions. There are excellent ones of this kind, such as *Virgil's Georgics*, *Father Vaniere's Rural Life*, *Father Rapin's Gardens*, *Honace's Art of Poetry*, *Vida*, *Boileau*, &c.

382. These three species of poems are not so distinct but that they sometimes mutually assist each other. In the philosophical poem we often find historical facts, and observations derived from the arts; and historical and didactic poems, reciprocally admit ratiocinations and principles. But these mutual aids do not constitute the foundation of the species.

383. Even fiction is not banished from these poems. Sometimes the poet suffers himself to be carried away by his imagination, and introduces episodes, like the fables of *Aristeus* and *Orpheus* in the *Georgics*. But these purely ornamental pieces do not hinder the whole of the poem from being of the *Didactic* species.

384. *Didactic Poems*, like other works, have a beginning, a middle, and an end: The subject is proposed, treated on, and finished. Historical poems have actions, passions, and actors, as well as that of the fictitious kind: But philosophical and practical poems have none. Those warm the heart; and these

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these enlighten the mind, or direct the acting faculties.

385. Didactic poets, in imitation of the others, invoke deities; and supposing themselves to be heard, they assume the tone of inspired men. On this supposition all the rules of the *Didactic* poem are founded, with respect to the form.

386. These rules are general or particular. The first may be reduced to three. 1. To conceal order to a certain degree. The poet seems to give scope to his genius, without regarding the laws of method; Yet the irregularity he allows himself, concerns only the little parts; in the great ones he necessarily follows the natural order. 2. To introduce things foreign to his subject, in order to adorn it and keep up the reader's attention. Such are the *Episodes*, which we have already mentioned. 3. To arrogate to himself all the privileges of the poetical style, metaphors, epithets, bold turns, licentious constructions, figures of speech and thought.

387. In general, Didactic poets use all the means they imagine fit to persuade their readers, that an intelligence more than human speaks to them, in order thereby to amaze the mind and command the attention. *Horace's Art of Poetry*, though written with the greatest simplicity, is not against this principle.

principle. The poet begins in an elevated strain, and delivers his precepts like an interpreter of the gods.

388. Besides these general rules, *Didactic Poetry* has particular ones, which are analogous to its different kinds. An historical poem has the right of giving the strokes with more vivacity, making them bolder, and more luminous: A Divine Being is supposed to be the painter. A philosophical poem must tend principally to instruction, which is the aim of the sciences: Therefore, method must be more perceptible in it than in other poems; and it is less allowable to throw in digressions which would prevent our following the thread of ratiocination. In fine, in poems that contain precepts, 'tis brevity that chiefly pleases and strikes the mind.

XXVII.

Of SATIRE.

389. *Satire* has not always had the same foundation, nor the same form in all times. It has been different among the Greeks and among the Romans; with the latter it has been subject to such singular changes, that it is almost impossible to follow it in all its variations.

390. Among

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390. Among the Greeks, it was an exhibition that kept a sort of medium between tragedy and comedy. It was characterized by its actors. They were neither heroes, nor gods, nor men: They employed such personages as a *Polyphemus*, a *Sisyphus*, &c. Of this kind of drama we have nothing left but the *Cyclops* of *Euripides*.

391. *Satire* was brought to *Rome* by the *Tuscans*; and it was then nothing else but a sort of song in dialogue, the whole merit of which consisted in the strength and vivacity of the repartees. It is said they were called *Satires*, from the Latin word *saturo*, which signified a bason wherein they put all sorts of fruits and offered them to the gods at once.

392. *Livius Andronicus*, *Ennius*, *Patruvius*, and *Varro*, introduced divers modifications in *Satire*. The latter gave it the surname of *Menippea*, on account of the resemblance he gave it to the satires of *Menippus*, a Greek philosopher. It was a medley of verse and prose.

393. At last *Lucilius* fixed the standard of this poem, and presented it in the form which *Horace*, *Perseus*, and *Juvenal* have given it to us, and such as we now see it in. At that time the word *Satire* was applied only to the medley of matter, and not to that of forms. *Satires* really became a confused heap of

of invectives against mankind, against their desires, their fears, their violent passions, their silly pleasures, their intrigues *.

394. *Satire* may then be defined, to be a poem in which the vices of men are directly attacked: Yet, properly speaking, it is only a discourse cloathed in verse. If it is required, that the subject matter in a poetical work be created, feigned, imagined by the poet, *Satire* is not a poem in the manner of the Apologue, Eclogue, Comedy, Tragedy, or Epopea.

395. *Satire* differs from comedy, in that it attacks directly the vices of men; whereas the latter attacks them only obliquely.

396. As there are two sorts of vices, some greater, others less, there are also two sorts of *Satire*; the one appears something like tragedy, as *Juvenal's*; the other, as that of *Horace* resembles comedy.

397. Several sorts of seasoning may prevail in *Satire*; the bitter, the dry, the sour, or the salt; and the latter is more or less pungent.

398. The spirit that commonly animates the satyrists, is not that of a philosopher, who

* *Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
Gaudia, discursus, nostri est farrago libelli.* Juven. Sat. I.

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without emerging from his tranquillity, paints the charms of virtue, and the deformity of vice; nor that of an orator, who, replete with noble zeal, would reform men and bring them back to righteousness; nor that of a poet, who intends only to make himself admired, by exciting terror and pity; nor that of a misanthropist, who hates mankind too much to desire to make them better.

399. The satyrist seems to cloak himself with a concern for virtue, that he may have the pleasure of lashing vice. In this sentiment there is a mixture of virtue and malignity, hatred of vice, and at least some contempt of mankind, a desire to be revenged, and a sort of chagrin for not being able to do it but by words. Such is the idea that seems to result from the works in which the satirical character is most conspicuous.

400. Again, *Satire* differs from criticism, in that the object of the latter is only to preserve in purity the ideas of what is good and true, in works of wit and taste, without any regard to the author, without meddling with his talents, or touching upon any thing that is personal: Whereas *Satire* seeks to sting the man himself, and conceals the stroke in some ingenious turn, only to procure the reader the pleasure of seeming to approve nothing but the wit.

401. Though

401. Though these sorts of works are of a blameable character, yet they may be read with advantage. We find some excellent principles in them to form the manners, and striking portraits which awaken the mind. But, in perusing them, we must be upon our guard, and preserve ourselves from the contagious spirit of the poet, which would render us malignant, and make us lose a virtue on which our own happiness and that of others in society depend.

402. The form of *Satire* is in itself quite indifferent. Sometimes it is of the epic kind, sometimes of the dramatic, but most frequently didactic. Sometimes it bears the name of a discourse, at other times it is called an epistle. All these forms alter not the nature of the subject matter, when the spirit of invective has dictated it.

XXVIII.

Of the principal SATIRICAL POETS.

403. *Caius Lucilius*, born at *Aurunca*, a city of *Italy*, of an illustrious family, turned his poetical talent to satire, and declared himself a sworn enemy to vice. He composed more than thirty books of satires, of which there are only a few fragments left. To judge from

from what *Horace* says of them, we need not much regret this loss. His style is prolix and languid, his verses are unpolish'd: However, *Quintilian* has judg'd more favourably of him. And we must add, that this poet lived at the time when literature had but just received its birth in *Italy*.

404. *Horace* profited by the advantage he had of being born in the finest age of Latin literature. He produced satire with all the graces it could receive, seasoning it no more than was necessary for pleasing delicate minds, and rendering knaves and fools despicable.

405. *Horace's* satires scarce offer any thing but the sentiments of a polite man, of a philosopher formed by conversation with the great world, who beholds with concern the irregularities of mankind, and sometimes diverts himself with them. They most frequently present nothing but general pictures of human life: And if now and then they give particular details, it is not so much with a design to offend any body, as to enliven the matter, and, as it were, to put the moral into action.

406. The title which *Horace* gave to his satires and epistles, sufficiently denote their character. He called them *Sermones*, discourses, conversations, reflections made amongst friends, on the life and characters of men.

men. His stile is simple, easy, lively, always moderate and calm: And as to simplicity, there is nothing better done nor more finished.

407. *Perseus* was born at *Volaterra*, a city of *Ettruria*, of a noble house, and allied to the greatest families of *Rome*. He died at the age of thirty, in the eighth year of *Nero's* reign. There are noble sentiments in his satires; but the stile is vehement, and rendered too obscure by laboured allegories, frequent ellipses, and too bold metaphors.

408. This poet is extremely grave; he is even a little melancholy; and whether it be owing to the vigour of his genius, or his zeal for truth, there seems to be in his philosophy a little sourness and animosity against those whom he attacks.

409. Notwithstanding all this, *Perseus*, in comparison of *Juvenal*, is almost frigid. The latter is warm to excess. Hyperbole is his favourite figure. He had an extraordinary strength of genius, and an impetuosity of temper, which alone might have almost sufficed to make him a poet. This is not the satire of *Horace*, who humorously trifles; nor that of *Perseus*, who argues: 'Tis satire armed with a sword, and fuming with rage. The same strain is kept up throughout in *Juvenal*; it is not enough for him to paint; he engraves deeply, he cauterizes.

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410. *Maturin Regnier*, a native of *Chartres*, and nephew of *Desportes*, a poet of the sixteenth century, was the first in *France* who wrote satires. There is a delicacy and an happy turn in those that he carefully finished; his verses are easy and flowing. Happy

Had he but wrote his *Cynic Rhymes* with Care,

And not so oft alarm'd the modest ear.

411. *Regnier* often loses sight of dignity in expressions, in thoughts, and even in things. He is sometimes tedious and prolix. His imitations are too far-stretched, and almost always inferior to his models.

X 412. *Nicholas Boileau Despreaux*, who came sixty years after *Regnier*, was more cautious, and considered decency as a virtue in writing, as well as in manners. His verses are nervous, finish'd, harmonious, and full of matter. He is close, accurate, decent, careful every where, suffering nothing useless nor obscure. His expressions are always just, frequently rich and bold; his turns are easy and lively: There is neither vacuity nor superfluity.

413. *Boileau's* plan of satire, was to attack vice in general, and bad authors in particular. He seldom names a villain, but he does not boggle at naming a bad author that displeases him, to serve as an example to others, and to

to maintain the prerogatives of good sense and good taste.

414. Most of *Boileau's* verses are so fine that they are become proverbs: They seem born rather than made.

415. *Boileau's Art of Poetry* is a masterpiece of reason, taste, and versification. All his verses are like so many oracles of good sense, delivered with all possible clearness and strength. The *Lutrin* is a work entirely of genius; a castle in the air, supported only by the art and strength of the architect. We behold in it the genius that creates, the judgment which arranges, the imagination that enriches, the strain that animates the whole, and the harmony which diffuses graces. His *Satires* and the *Epistles* abound with wit, vivacity, and original strokes.

416. If we examine the characters of the principal satirical authors, in order to see wherein they resemble each other, and in what they differ, it appears that *Horace* and *Boileau* have more resemblance between them than either of them has with *Juvenal*. They both lived in a polite age, wherein taste was pure, and the idea of the beautiful unmixed. On the contrary, *Juvenal* lived in the time of the decline of Latin literature, when people judged of the goodness of a work by its richness, rather than by the oeconomy of the

ornaments. As to *Perseus*, he has a character peculiar to himself, which sympathizes with nobody.

XXIX.

Of EPISTOLARY POETRY.

417. An *Epistle in Verse* is nothing but a letter addressed to any person. It has its rules as a letter, and they are those of the *Epistolary* style, of which we shall speak hereafter. The rules it may have as a letter in verse, are all reducible to this; that it must at least have a certain degree of either strength or elegance; in a word, a degree of care above what would have been bestowed on it in writing it only in prose.

418. The matter of such epistles is of an unlimited extent. One may employ it in praising, blaming, reciting, philosophizing, teaching, &c. Nor is it more confined with regard to the tones of style it may assume. All those in use suit it; because its diction falls or rises, according to the matter, or the condition of the person who writes, or to whom it is addressed. Besides, the same epistle admits all sorts of tones, at least all that relate to the matter.

419. An *Epistle in Verse*, is begun and ended without preparation; and the title prefixed to it

it is like a notice to the reader, to judge of the work only as he would judge of a letter.

XXX.

Of the EPIGRAM.

420. An *Epigram* was formerly the very thing that we now call an *Inscription*. It was engraved on the frontispieces of temples, on monuments, public edifices, &c. Such as were placed upon tombs, they called *Epitaphs*, from the Greek name of a monument, whereon they were engraved. In our days the word *Epigram* signifies an interesting thought, happily and concisely presented in verse.

421. The *Anthology*, or Collection of Greek *Epigrams*, might enable us to form a judgment of the antique taste, provided we now knew all that ought to be known, in order to judge of it with certainty. It appears that the Greeks did not study for witty conceits, which, doubtless, proceeded not from want of wit, but because they held them not in esteem.

422. The Latins have also their *Epigrammatists*. *Catullus* made a pretty good number of *Epigrams*, which are happily turned, but are not genteel and decent. *Martial*, more lively, more vigorous, more concise, has given a collection of *Epigrams*, which a-

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grees with the judgment he himself has passed on it *.

423. We have scarce any *French* poets, but what have made some *Epigrams*. We esteem those of *Gonbaud*, *St. Gelais*, and *Marot*, for their simplicity. Those of the *Chevalier de Cailly* are reckoned the best.

424. The *Epigram* rises to what is most noble in every kind, and stoops to the minutest things. Yet simplicity, or mediocrity, better agree with it than the exalted kind, because its characteristic is freedom and ease.

425. There are two parts in an *Epigram*: The exposition of the subject which brings on the thought; and the thought itself, or the point. The exposition ought to be simple, easy, and clear; and the thought should be lively in itself, and by the manner of turning it.

426. *Epigrams* that have no wit but pun or equivocation, are now least esteemed of any, either because they are easily made, or from their resembling buffoonery, or, in fine, because they denote a mind intent upon seeking too trivial affinities between the sounds and the different acceptations of words.

427. An untrue thought is one of the greatest defects that can be found in an *Epigram*:

* *Sunt bona; sunt quedam mediocritas; sunt mala plura.*

It leaves in the mind a certain insipidity mixed with ill-nature. However, if the falsity is recompensed by something agreeable, the thought, though not true, may pass for a witty jest, and please as much as truth.

428. There is scarce any species of poetry that has more of the bad in it than this; because it requires genius, wit, and especially a certain turn of mind bestowed on very few persons.

XXXI.

Of the MADRIGAL, the SONNET, the RONDEAU, and the TRIOLET.

429. These four species of little poems are usually analogous with the *Epigram*, because they have this in common with it, of being only one interesting thought happily presented. The only difference that characterizes them, is the very nature of the thought, or the arrangement of the verse.

430. *Madrigal* is distinguished by the character of the thought. It has a point; but this point is always gentle, graceful, and has nothing stinging in it, but what is needful to prevent its being insipid. Its simplicity is rather in the turn itself than in the thought, which always has a certain spice of wit.

431. The

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431. The *Sonnet* is a poem of fourteen verses which requires so many qualities, that scarce in a thousand can we find two or three that deserve praise. Its artificial form consists in the arrangement and the quality of the rhymes; and *Boileau* has very happily expressed it, in saying

It ever is Apollo's greatest Pleasure,
That in two Stanza's of the four-lin'd measure,
Two Sounds be form'd with such poetic Care,
To strike eight times, harmoniously, the Ear;
Then in six Verses artfully display'd,
The Sense should in two Triplets be convey'd.

432. The character of the *Rondeau* is simplicity. It admits of the Gaulish turns, which seem yet to retain that blunt and frank air which characterized our ancestors. The *Rondeau* is composed of thirteen verses with two refrets, or burthens. The verses consist of two sorts of rhymes, eight masculine and five feminine, or seven masculine and six feminine. The first refret is after the 8th verse, and the second after the thirteenth; Besides which, there is a necessary pause after the fifth verse. The refret should always be linked with the preceding thought, and terminate its sense in a natural way; and it pleases, especially, when in representing the same words, it presents ideas somewhat different.

433. The

433. The *Triplet* (verses of three stanzas) is a species of the *Rondeau*, whose beauty consists in the return of the same verses, to form a set of new sentiments.

XXXII.

Of WORKS in PROSE.

434. Though the language of prose did certainly precede that of poetry, it was not an inversion of order, to begin with a disquisition of the latter. In order to learn how to judge in matters of literature, we must at first employ ourselves on works where the beauties and the defects being more sensible, give also more opportunities of exercising the taste and the understanding, and where art openly shews itself.

435. When once we have well discerned this art, such as it is, and are very sure of having seized its true principles, we endeavour to discover it in the works where it usually conceals itself. This order is the very order of the human mind, which makes things we are sensible of, a means to come at those that are not so.

436. The ordinary language, that of necessity only, has preceded all other modes of speech. It is the most essential instrument

of

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of society; and mankind directed its first cares towards the needful. On the contrary, the oratorical language, where all the resources of art are joined to natural genius, was not brought under formal rules, 'till after the great successes of poetry, by whose example eloquence became sensible that there were means to present objects in a way fit to seduce the ear, and warm the heart.

437. *Homer* was looked upon not only as the prince of poetry, but also as the father of eloquence, history, philosophy, and all the arts. The care he took to follow nature scrupulously, even in the midst of his actions and fictions, made historians and orators feel what they ought to do, especially in painting truth.

438. Poetry and eloquence differ, both by the end they propose, and the means they use to attain it. The object of poetry is to please; and if sometimes it instructs, 'tis because utility is a means that helps it to attain its end. The object of eloquence is to instruct; and if it designs to please, 'tis from a knowledge that this is the surest way to persuade.

439. Rhetoric, Logic, and Grammar, are three arts that should always walk hand in hand. The first is the art of speaking eloquently, the second that of thinking well, and the third that of speaking with propriety.

440. Speak-

440. Speaking eloquently, is to discourse in such a manner as may obtain a hearing, and to persuade the hearers. Thinking well, is to render our ideas precise and clear, to be circumspect in our judgment, and coherent and accurate in our arguments. Speaking with propriety, is to make use of received terms and lawful constructions.

441. These are the three universal instruments, the use of which extends to all species of writing in the sciences and in literature; and which, in those that possess them all, denote a good education, rectitude of mind, and fertility of genius.

XXXIII.

Of ORATIONS.

442. The word *Oration*, according to its etymology, and in the sense wherein Grammarians use it, denotes every thought expressed in discourse. We restrain it here to every discourse prepared with art to work persuasion.

443. There is a great difference between the talent of oration, and the art that helps to form it. The talent is called *Eloquence*, the art is *Rhetoric*: The one produces, the other

other judges, the one forms the orator, the other what is call'd the rhetorician.

444. We commonly reduce to three kinds all questions in which persuasion may take place, and which belong to eloquence. They are called the *demonstrative* kind, the *deliberative* kind, and the *judicial* kind.

445. The principal object of the first, is the present time; the second, futurity; the third, the time past. In the demonstrative we praise, or blame. In the deliberative, we induce to act, or not to act. In the judicial, we accuse, or defend.

XXXIV.

Of the DEMONSTRATIVE KIND.

446. The *Demonstrative Kind*, includes panegyrics, funeral orations, academical discourses, compliments made to kings, princes, &c. On these occasions, every thing must be collected that may do honour and give pleasure to the person we praise.

447. An orator, when he intends to honour his hero too much, should beware of dishonouring himself. If his proofs are ill chosen, if he draws from the sources of flattery, rather than from the fountain of truth, the auditor
grows

grows angry at his attempting to make him an accomplice in his meanness.

448. *Panegyrics* are a very difficult composition. 'Tis a sort of triumph granted to virtue. But sometimes virtues are not pure enough to deserve that honour; sometimes he that undertakes this task, has not the talents requisite for executing it well.

XXXV.

Of the DELIBERATIVE KIND.

449. Here we are not confined to the praising of virtue; we shew the reasons that should induce us to embrace it. To succeed in this, a man must be master of his subject, and attentively consider all its parts, not only real but possible.

450. When the business is to examine whether an enterprize be useful or not, we must carefully calculate the *pro* and *con* of the probabilities, without omitting any of the circumstances that may have place in such a calculation. This supposes a solid and disinterested mind.

451. The business here is not to make a parade of graces, to tickle the ear, and flatter the imagination: The whole consists only in representing things with energy and simplicity.

plicity. Such is the eloquence of *Demosthenes*; if he is rich and pompous, it is merely by the strength of his good sense.

XXXVI.

Of the JUDICIAL KIND.

452. The object of questions of this kind is fact, right, or title; and it always turns upon some wrong, either real, or pretended to be real. Wrong may be defined, a free action that deprives a man of something which he lawfully possesses.

453. If there were no legal rights, no wrongs could be done. If there was no liberty, there would be no real crime.

454. We distinguish two sorts of right; one natural, engraved on the hearts of all men; the other civil, which obliges all the citizens of the same community or the same republic, to do, or not to do, certain things for the common interest. Those that violate the civil law, are bad citizens: Those that violate the natural law, offend human nature.

455. The orator makes the best of the authority of the laws; and he excites attention, when he shews that the common interest has been injured by the action for which he demands justice.

456. The

456. The three kinds we have just mentioned, are not so separated from each other as never to be unitable. Very far from it; the contrary happens in almost all discourses, because honesty, utility, and equity, commonly center in the same point.

457. Whatever subject the orator handles, he necessarily has three functions to perform: The first is to search out the objects he is to discourse of; the second, to put them in proper order; the third, to express them decently. This we call *invention*, *disposition*, *expression*; and these three operations are found in all the arts.

XXXVII.

OF INVENTION.

458. The orator's object is to persuade. To succeed in this, he must prove, please, and touch the passions. Sometimes one of these means alone is sufficient; and sometimes all three are not too much. We prove by arguments; we please by manners; we affect by the passions.

459. Logic teaches the art of forming arguments. In works of taste this form is not observed. The oratorical syllogism commonly presents the proposition to be proved, before

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expressing the reason that proves it. It also takes in other propositions, which serve as proofs to the major and minor. This is what made the philosopher Zeno, compare philosophic argument to a clenched fist, and oratorical argument to an open hand.

460. The ancients, who were for making an art of every thing, made one for *Invention*. They called *Common-places*, all the repertories or magazines, that contain every treasure which is the object of invention.

461. The first of those places is *definition*, by which the orator finds in the nature of the very thing he speaks of, a reason to persuade us that what he says of it is right. Oratorical definition is very different from philosophical definition: Properly speaking, it is an enumeration of parts, which leads to a conclusion with respect to the whole.

462. *Etymology*, and *Homonymy*, afford us no great resources; and a good cause is often hurt by defending it with such weapons.

463. The *Genus* and the *Species* lead to valid conclusions, by descending from the first to the second, or ascending from the second to the first.

464. *Similitude* scarcely differs from comparison, and *Dissimilitude* is confounded with contraries.

465. *Con-*

465. *Contraries* are of great use: 'Tis often the best way of exhibiting a thought. By telling at first what a thing is not, the mind of the hearer is put in action, and he endeavours himself to find what it is.

466. Things *repugnant* serve to prove the impossibility of a fact.

467. *Circumstances* are of great weight in proofs. Sometimes they are heaped together, as it were to bear down the hearer by their number.

468. *Antecedents* and *Consequents* are the things that precede or follow a fact, and lead to the knowledge of it.

469. In fine, in considering the *Cause* and the *Effects*, we blame or praise an action, we advise an enterprize, or dissuade from it.

470. All these common places are called *internals*, because they are relative to the subject itself, and are, as it may be said, extracted from the bowels of the cause. To these we join *exterior* places, which are six in number; the *Law*, the *Title*, *Common Report*, the *Oath*, the *Question*, the *Witnesses*; means all placed out of the cause, and without which, taking them all separately, a cause may subsist. The necessary details on this subject are to be found in the treatises of rhetoric.

471. After having proved, the author studies to please, and 'tis by *Manners* that he gradually

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dually insinuates himself: He prepares mens minds, and subdues them with their own consent.

472. By *Manners* in eloquence, we mean virtue, and the orator's virtue, which the Heathens defined *Vir bonus dicendi peritus*. We would have him to be an honest man, and that his whole discourse should bear the stamp of probity.

473. To probity we must add modesty. Nothing is more offensive to an audience than the pride of the speaker: And, in general, modesty is the characteristic of true learning, as well as of true merit.

474. To the foregoing qualities the orator must add benevolence, or rather zeal for the good of the audience. All men are prone to believe what their friends tell them.

475. Prudence is a fourth quality, which necessarily implies knowledge. It is required of the orator, because it would be of no use to be guided by an honest man, or a sincere friend, if he himself was ignorant of the road.

476. The orator who has established his authority on these four virtues, and displays them in all his discourses, perfectly gains the confidence of his audience, and draws them after him rather than persuades them.

477. The

477. The third means to attain the same end, is to apply to the *passions*: A dangerous instrument, when not rationally managed: but more efficacious than reason itself, when it accompanies and serves it. 'Tis by the passions that eloquence triumphs, and reigns over the heart. Whosoever knows how to excite them seasonably, masters the mind of man as he pleases.

478. The passions are impetuous emotions of the soul, which carry us towards an object, or make us turn away from it. In order to excite them, we must paint the objects with qualities agreeable and useful, or disagreeable and detrimental, to those we are speaking to.

479. Love and hatred are the basis of all the other passions, because they include the two relations of our soul with good and evil. If the evil is present, 'tis grief, pain; if it be absent, with some appearance of avoiding it, 'tis fear; if it cannot be avoided, 'tis despair; if it be in other men, but so that it may come upon ourselves, 'tis compassion. In like manner, with regard to good; if it is present, it causes joy: If it is absent, and there be any means of obtaining it, 'tis hope: If it be in others to our prejudice, 'tis envy: If any attempts wrest it from us when we possess

ses it, 'tis anger. All tragic authors abound with similar examples.

XXXVIII.

Of Disposition.

480. *Disposition* in the oratorical art, consists in arranging all the parts furnished by invention, according to the nature and the interest of the object we treat of. Fertility of genius shines in the *Invention*, prudence and judgment in the *Disposition*.

481. Every work, if it be complete, must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Thus, in oratorical discourse, there will be an *Exordium*; then follow the recitals, or the proofs; and lastly the conclusion, whatever it may be, which at least gives notice that all is said.

482. An *Exordium* is that part of the discourse which prepares the audience to hear the rest. The masters of this art will have it to be ingenious, modest, concise, and drawn from the very foundation of the subject. If there is a necessity for speaking extempore, they seize the first *Exordium* that occurs; and if none can be readily found, they enter upon the matter without any other preparation.

483. There

483. There are two sorts of *Exordiums*; One of which is made in the insinuating way, when the intention is to dispose men by degrees, to take the road we would have them follow, or to bring them back gently from their prejudices. The other, called in terms of art, *Exordium ex abrupto*, is used, when violent grief, great joy, or strong indignation, dwells in the hearts of the hearers. Then the orator breaks out in beginning, as *Cicero* does in his *Catilinaries*.

484. *Narration*, or recital, in the judicial kind, commonly comes after the division; beause in this case the proof must arise from the facts. The art of this part consists in presenting the first dawning of the proofs we intend to employ; to the end that they may afterwards appear truer and more natural, when they are deduced by way of argumentation.

485. The order and the details of the recital, ought to be directed to the same end. In the most apparent places the favourable circumstances are exhibited, whilst we leave in obscurity, or represent but faintly, those that are disadvantageous.

486. Next come the *Proofs*, for the arrangement of which, rhetoricians propose the model of an army. In the first rank they place the most vigorous and the bravest; to secure

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secure the victory, other choice troops are kept in reserve; and in the middle the soldiers of equivocal bravery are placed.

487. Yet each subject has its peculiar rules; it rests on the prudence and good sense of the orator to find them and follow them. All that is to be recommended, is plainness and precision. A proof too distended, grows weak; when too close, it becomes obscure.

488. An orator has two things to perform in his proof; first, to establish his proposition by all the means which his cause affords; secondly, to refute the means used by his adversary. Refutation requires much art, because it is more difficult to cure a wound than to make one. The retorting an argument, when it is feasible, has a very good effect.

489. *Peroration* is the conclusion of a discourse. It commonly includes a recapitulation of all the most striking passages of it, whether to convince or to affect; and this leads back to the proposition, as to a final result of the reasons alledged.

XXXIX.

Of ORATORIAL ELOCUTION.

490. *Elocution* seems to operate more than all the rest on the mind of the hearers: Therefore

fore the Greek and Latin rhetoricians entered into the nicest discussions on this matter. They even went so far as to count the letters, the syllables, measure the words, and compute the time they took in pronouncing them.

491. A thought may be expressed three ways; by the tone of the voice, as when we groan; by the gesture, as when we make a sign to any one to advance, or draw back; by speech, when we pronounce words. The last is called *Elocution*.

492. As thought in general is the representation of something in the mind, so expression in general is the representation of thought. And as there are three sorts of thoughts, ideas, judgment, and ratiocination; so there are three sorts of expressions, the term, the proposition, and the argument.

493. Thoughts and expressions have two sorts of qualities; some may be called logical, because 'tis reason and good sense that require them; the others are qualities belonging to taste, because they are determined by it. The former are the substance of the discourse, and the latter the reasoning of it.

494. The first essential quality of a thought is, truth; i. e. that it represent the object such as it is. The expression is likewise true, when it represents justly to others the thought we

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we have. It is false, when it does not exhibit it in that manner.

495. A thought perfectly true, is *just*. Custom, however, makes some difference between the truth and the justness of a thought: Truth more precisely signifies the conformity of the thought with the object; justness denotes more expressly its extent. It is the same with expression; it is just, when it has neither more nor less extent than the thought.

496. *Clearness* or perspicuity is the second quality, supposing it cannot be the first; for if it is not clear, it cannot properly be called a thought. When we perceive a thought unclouded and without obscurity, it is *clear*; when we see it separated from all the other objects that surround it, it is *distinct*.

497. Whoever intends to produce a thought, must therefore first of all well digest it, and accurately divest it of every thing that does not belong to it. Expression will then occur of itself.

498. Such is the summary of logical qualities, without which nothing can be fine in works of literature. But in order to please, 'tis not sufficient that there be no faults; there must be graces, and these are, derived from taste.

499. All the rules of *Elocution*, so far as it is subordinate to taste, are reducible to these two points; choice and arrangement.

500. In

500. In the choice of thoughts, we must reject all those that are erroneous, useless, trivial, low, or unnatural. Among those that may be made use of, the first that occur are the common thoughts, which serve as the foundation to work upon. But, in order to raise them, we employ all such as have in themselves something agreeable, as vivacity, energy, copiousness, boldness, gracefulness, ingenuity, nobleness, &c.

501. With all these species of thoughts, as many sorts of expressions correspond. Yet there may happen to be in the expression, a character of ingenuity, boldness, &c. that is not in the thought, which proceeds from the difference of the rules of nature, and those of art in this point.

502. There are proper terms, which are used in their primitive and natural signification; and borrowed terms that are employed in a sense foreign to them, but which is lent them on account of some resemblance between the objects.

503. Whenever the proper word is not used to express an idea, it is done either through ignorance, necessity, or taste. When it is done ignorantly, 'tis the fault of the person, who does not understand his own language. When through necessity, the defect is in the language, which does not afford the mind all
O the

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the words it wants. When it proceeds from taste, 'tis because we find in the improper word an agreeableness which is not in the proper one.

504. Clearness being the first beauty of discourse, and propriety of terms being the principal source of clearness, propriety must be considered as one of the most precious qualities of expression. It is especially essential in didactic works.

505. Borrowed terms, when they are so by taste and choice, make the discourse agreeable and brilliant. They are called *Tropes*, from a Greek word, which, in general, signifies change, or transport. The following are some of the principal *Tropes*.

506. *Metaphor*, is a term transferred from its proper and ordinary signification to another that is improper to it, so as that some agreeableness results from it, as when we say, a *Harvest of Glory*, a *smiling Meadow*, &c. If the *Metaphor* be extended, and we continue it by taking in new words, it is then called *Allegory*.

507. *Metonymy*, points out a thing by the name of its author, as the *Labours of Mars*, for war, the *Muses*, for the fine arts. It also takes the cause for the effect, and the thing containing, for that contained.

508. *Synecdoche*,

508. *Synecdoche*, places a part instead of the whole, the forehead for the whole face, or even for the whole person; the whole for a part; and the matter for the thing itself.

509. *Irony*, or counter-truth, is used when we precisely say the contrary of what we think, in order to make sport at the expence of the person we impose upon.

510. *Hyperbole* resembles *Irony*, in that it adds to the thing spoken of, some degrees, more or less, than it has in reality. Those who are desirous of larger details on this head, may find them in Mr. *Du Marfais's* excellent treatise on *Tropes*.

511. There are phrases, words, expressions, which are destined to appear in the more elevated performances, such as panegyrics, studied discourses, lofty poetry; they are called *noble terms*: And there are some, which, notwithstanding their energy, are condemned to remain in abasement; and these are called *low terms*. Between these two degrees there is a medium, which contains all the phrases and all the words, that have something of the two extremes, without uniting them. Those phrases and words, form the body and the basis of every discourse; and afterwards the mixture of *noble* or *low* terms, either ennobles or degrades it.

512. There

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512. There is in all good writers, a coherent body of natural thoughts, taken from common sense, and derived from the very essence of the subject: It is the essence of the whole composition.

Scribendi recte sapere est, et principium et fons.
On this uniform ground, the flowers of elocution are strewed with choice and taste.

513. The order in which we place the expressions and thoughts, can have but two objects in view; either to give them more grace or more energy. But it rarely happens that grace and energy are separated. The arrangement of the words, contributes at once to give ease and clearness to discourses, from whence gracefulness proceeds, and to make the ideas join properly, to combine them mutually, proceeds energy.

514. When this connection is sensible to the ear and the mind, by the concert and agreement of the sounds which compose the words, there results from it the charms of what is called *Harmony*.

515. We understand by *Figura*, in point of elocution, the arrangement of the parts of an oratorical phrase, or even of several phrases together, with a certain analogy of symmetry.

516. The figures of words, consist in the manner of arranging them, in order to give them an easier or a firmer course. Sometimes in the

the *repetition* of a conjunction in poetry; or of an exclamation: The *gradation*, which places the words according to their degree of strength or weakness; *he departs, he runs, he flies*: The *regression*, which throws back the words upon themselves, with a different sense; as, we must not *live to drink and eat*, but we must *eat and drink to live*. The *disjunction*, which omits the conjunctive particles, in order to render the discourse more lively and rapid: The *Adjunction*, which is done by suppressing one of two verbs; as *complaisance makes friends, and truth enemies*.

517. Among the *Figures of Thoughts*, we make a distinction between those which excite the attention, and those that chiefly affect the heart. To move the heart, we must apply to the mind; and to awaken the mind, we must interest the heart.

518. *Subjection* is a poignant figure, whereby we interrogate an adversary or an auditor, at the same time taking the answer upon ourselves. The interrogation animates the mind: The hearer seeks the answer, and takes delight in previously finding it.

519. The *Ante-occupation* prevents the objection, in order to refute it before-hand. This is a dextrous turn to elude, or at least to weaken, the reasons that may be brought against us.

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520. *Compensation*, which is analogous to *Parallel*, makes two things, or two persons, figure together. It is a pleasant exercise for the mind, which goes and returns from one to the other, counts the features and strokes, compares them, and is continually judging of the difference and the resemblance.

521. *Suspension*, or *Sustentation*, is one of the most poignant figures. It is made, when after a discourse of some length, which promises something interesting, we present quite another object than that which was expected. Such is the well known sonnet of *Scarron*, which begins with this verse;

Monuments, superb of human pride,

522. *Reticence*, is the disclosing a thing, whilst we declare that we shall be cautious of mentioning it.

523. In *Correction*, the orator takes himself up abruptly, as if he would speak more to the purpose, or talk of another matter.

524. The *Apostrophe* is used, not when we direct our speech to any body, but when we turn it off from those we talked to in the beginning, in order to speak to others. We may use it towards the living, the dead, to persons present and absent, and even things inanimate.

525. In *Dialogism*, a man talks with himself, or else makes two persons talk together.

526. *Pro-*

526. *Prosopopeia* opens tombs, raises the dead, makes Heaven and Earth speak, and all beings too, whether real, abstracted, or imaginary. This is one of the finest turns of Elocution.

527. *Hypotyposis* is an image, a picture. When it paints the outside of man, it is called *Prosopography*. When it paints the manners, we call it *Ethopoeia*. If it be employed in describing places, it is *Topography*.

528. *Comparison* consists in opposing to each other two objects that are similar, either in several parts, or in one alone.

529. *Antithesis* opposes words to words, and thoughts to thoughts. It is a figure that easily occurs to the mind; but, when it returns too frequently, marring the style rather than adorns it.

530. The principal figures made use of to affect the heart, are *Exclamation*, which breaks out with interjections; *Confession*, which acknowledges the crime in order to obtain pardon; *Deprecation*, which has recourse to prayers and tears; *Commination*, which vents itself in menaces; and *Imprecation*, which is expressive of fury and despair. *Interrogation* is often found in all these figures, and serves to render the style very vehement.

531. Amongst all the oratorical figures, there is none that contributes more than *Amplification*

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tion to express a sentiment, in every sense it is capable of. An important thought that passes like a flash of lightning, is scarce perceived; if it be repeated in an artless manner, it no longer has the merit of novelty. It must therefore be presented several times, and each time with different decorations; so that the mind being taken up with this sort of artifice, may dwell with pleasure on the same object, and receive every impression intended to be given.

532. *Harmony* in general, is the accordance of several things existing in the same genus. Thus, colours have harmony in a picture, lines drawn in a plot of ground, sounds in music, thoughts in discourse; in fine, words and turns in style.

533. In discourse we distinguish three sorts of accordances; 1. That of sounds and words, considered as a continued chain, a series of things which hold together, and mutually bear away each other; 2. That of the parts between themselves, considered with respect to a certain extent, and as pieces of a compartment made to figure together; in fine, 3. The agreement of those same sounds and words, compared with the things they signify.

534. The first species of accordance may be called *Melody*. This is the successive agreement of the sounds, of which only a part
exists

exists at a time, but it is combined by its affinities with the sounds that precede or follow, as in musical songs. The second, called *Number*, consists in the distribution of the pauses, as the sense and the ear require. The third species, which retains the name of the genus, results from the accordance of harsh or smooth sounds, flat or sharp, brief or long, lofty or gentle numbers, bold or timid, &c. with the sweet or harsh, serious or gay, slow or quick ideas, &c. which we want to express.

535. The elementary sounds, and the primordial combinations of language, form a common mass, from whence nations have drawn all their words, which they framed agreeably to certain laws, introduced among them by custom, habit, example, necessity, art, imagination, occasions, or chance. 'Tis thus that all the airs, every species, and kind of music, are derived from seven notes.

536. It is observed with regard to sounds, 1. That the more they approach to the simplicity of the elements, the sweeter they are, and easier to pronounce; 2. That the longer they are, the more melodious; 3. That the more clear they are, the more sonorous. On the contrary, the more they are either compounded, brief, or close, the more harsh, dry, or dull, they will be.

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537. As to the combination of sounds, it must be observed, that the vowels which join in uniting them together, are always soft; that those which do not join, produce yawnings, called *hiatus*; that the consonants which jarr one another, are harsh more or less, because the configuration they give to the vowel, becomes laboured, and seems overcharged.

538. The perfection of this kind, consists in so disposing the consonants and the vowels, that they may mutually give each other consistency and softness; that the consonants support the vowels, and that the vowels in their turn combine and polish the consonants.

539. *French* ears are very nice about the connection of words with each other, and with much more reason about the combination of letters and syllables in words. They make choice of words which are nervous and soft, and at the same time flow freely and lightly, that are polished without being effeminate, and elevated without being harsh or stiff. And perhaps, in this part, the *French* tongue is the most perfect of the living languages.

540. As to the connection of the members, the whole is reducible to ease and variety. This last quality must even prevail over the other, in order to prevent the disgust occasioned by too strict an uniformity.

541. The

541. The *Oratorical Number*, is taken in the same sense as the *Rhyme* of the Greeks. It denotes, 1. A space, whatever it be, whose affinity with another space is easily found; 2. The ultimate sounds, which render the cadence, the end of a member, or of a period, agreeable: 3. What musicians call time, which makes the song more or less quick or slow; 4. In fine, we sometimes give this name to what the Greeks called *Metre*, and the Latins *Fest*, and which we may call measure, though not with so great propriety.

542. It was on account of respiration, that the necessity of the oratorical number was first felt. The vocal organ requires an interval to resume its spring; and nature, which never separates the agreeable from the truly useful, has annexed a pleasure to respiration, which the audience feel no less than the orator.

543. Besides this kind of pause, three others may be distinguished; 1. The pauses of the objects, which arise from their being presented without confusion, and consequently separated by some interval; 2. The pauses of the mind, which are relative to the three operations of the soul, idea, judgment, and ratiocination; and, 3. The pauses of the ear, which come after a certain space, and are like so many points, destined to terminate a cer-

tain

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tain series of time, and to mark the instant for beginning another series.

544. The pauses of the breath and those of the mind, may be marked by punctuation. The pauses of objects and of the ear, are not marked by any sensible sign in writing; and in pronunciation only by tones, which taste alone prescribes. This is the reason why so few persons can read so as to be heard with pleasure.

545. Poetry has chosen its pauses, according to the wants of respiration, and according to the laws of taste. Therefore prose, in order to please, must follow nearly the same rules; since it is to be conveyed by the same organs, and judged by the same taste.

546. In poetry, this is the first interval that commonly serves to regulate the others. In prose, the intervals are independent of one another; provided they do not go beyond certain bounds, 'tis sufficient. It may be said, that prose is only imprisoned, but poetry is fettered.

547. In this matter, offence is given by the two extremes. Obscurity and embarrassment arise, when the pauses are too few: And affectation, when too many. Some think they have done wonders, when they have heaped symmetry upon symmetry, and all the thoughts are in compartments; and it happens, that instead

instead of a noble, free, and vigorous elocution, we meet with nothing but an affected style, and a puerile brilliancy.

548. The *French* have reserved to their poetry, the absolutely exclusive privilege of symmetrical cadencies, which are rhymes, in the same manner as the ancients reserved brilliant metre for theirs. Yet the numbers in *French* poetry, may be directed by some rules in the syllables preceding the pauses. The option lies in the orator, according as the subject he handles requires, or the very thought he presents, or, in fine, the variety, which is indispensably necessary in this part.

549. Numbers, considered as *Motion*, consists in slowness and swiftness, and in their degrees. The motion of a discourse is found in the composition, as well as in the action of him who declaims. But it is rightly felt in the action only; it is the same in written music, where we are not sensible of it but when it is sung.

550. Nothing is of more importance to an orator, than to know how to make a right use of numbers; for they contain a great part of that degree of elocution, of that demi-poetic rapture, which alone deserves the name of eloquence.

551. The harmony of sounds considered as signs, is the accordance of the former with the things

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things signified. It consists, 1. In the suitableness and agreement of the sounds, syllables, and words, with the objects which express them; 2. In the agreement of the stile with the subject.

552. The first sounds were imitative. They are founded in, or run through all languages, and serve as the basis of them. We find them in an infinite number of terms, as in *French* in the words *gronder*, *murmurer*, *tanner*, *siffler*, &c. i. e. to grumble, to murmur, to thunder, to whistle, or hiss.

553. From thence we may infer, that the first principle for harmony is to make use of words or phrases, which contain by their softness or harshness, their slowness or swiftness, the imitative expression that may be in the sounds. All great poets have laid down this as a rule.

554. The duration of sounds may also contribute to expression. The Greeks and Latins had this advantage, that some of their vowels were long, and others short. However, the *French* have long ones in their manner, and by comparison with the short, from their arrangement, is produced the harmony that suits words taken separately.

555. There is another that belongs to phrases, which, in representing the connection of certain ideas, must bear the character of

of them, be more soft, more light, more flowing, according to the words we chuse, the place we give them, and the manner in which we arrange them.

556. *Harmony of Stile*, is that of the general tone, either of the writer who composes, or of the orator who declaims, with the subject taken also in general, and in the whole. The essential point is to be well versed in the subject we handle, to feel its weight, extent, and degrees of dignity: After which we give it the thoughts, the words, and the turns that are proper for it.

557. There is a wide difference between the lofty and the simple stile. The most noted character of the latter, is, that it has neither fixed melody, nor harmony, uniformly maintained, nor sensible number. All is negligent, and without any progression in the ideas and phrases.

558. Of the two species of *Harmony*, the first, which is the accordance of sounds with objects, is scarcely found but in poetry, and especially in the more elevated kind; for as poets, in their enthusiasm, personify every thing in nature, giving motion and action to all, and a lively action too, imitation is more easily practised, and the resemblances more sensible. In the other kinds, where there must be as much reasoning as painting, this har-

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mony is much less frequent, and less remarkable. The whole is reducible almost to melody, and to the second species of harmony.

559. *Stile* * results from the choice and arrangement of words, according to the laws of harmony and number, relatively to the elevation or the simplicity of the subject, 'Tis the manner, the tone, the colouring, that reigns sensibly in a work, or in any of its parts.

560. There are three sorts of *stile*, the *simple*, the *middling*, and the *sublime*, or rather the *elevated stile*.

561. The *simple stile* is used in familiar conversations, letters, and fables. It should be pure, clear, and without any apparent ornament.

562. The *middling* or *mediocre stile* has all the clearness of the *simple stile*, and admits of all the ornaments and all the colouring of elocution.

563. The *sublime stile* is that which makes nobleness, dignity, and majesty reign in a work. All the thoughts in it are noble and elevated; all the expressions are weighty, sonorous, harmonious, &c.

* This word formerly signified the needle made use of to write on tables overspread with wax. This needle was pointed at one end, and flatted at the other, in order to erase at pleasure: Which made Horace say, *Sæpe stylum vertas*.

564. The

564. The elevated stile, and what is called the sublime, are not the same thing. The latter is every thing that raises, seizes, or suddenly disturbs the soul. 'Tis a momentary flash. The elevated stile may be long kept up: 'Tis a lofty strain, 'tis noble and majestic.

565. These three sorts of stile are often found in one and the same work, because the subject matter sinking and rising, the stile which is, as it were, borne along by the matter, must rise and fall with it. But we must carefully contrive the passages, and the connections, to soften or heighten the tints insensibly; except in certain cases, where the matter breaking off suddenly, the stile is obliged to change abruptly.

566. The stile may also be *periodical*, or *divided*. The periodical stile is that wherein the phrases are combined with one another, either by the sense, or by conjunctions. The divided stile is that in which all the parts are independent, and without any reciprocal connection.

567. We may define the *Period* to be, a thought composed of several other thoughts, each of which has a suspended sense, 'till a final pause, which is common to them all. Each of these thoughts taken separately, is called a member of a period. There may be

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to the amount of four of these members in a period; when they are more in number, 'tis a periodical discourse,

568. We call *Ineises*, some other parts, which enter into the composition of the members of the period, in order to extend, or strengthen the thought.

569. The principal things to be observed on the members of the period, is, that if they are too short, they will want consistency; if too long, they will want motion; that the cadences of each member ought to be accompanied with something agreeable, and that of the last member should always be more so than the others: In fine, the thoughts must here remain fixed without constraint, and succeed one another in such a manner, in the progression, that the last may always add something to those that precede.

570. The periodical stile has two advantages over the divided stile: 1. It is more harmonious; 2. It keeps the mind in suspense. The divided stile has more vivacity and splendor. They are both alternately used as the matter requires.

571. Among all the qualities that characterize good stile, there is one that surpasses all the others, and which seems to contain them all: 'Tis *simplicity*: The Greeks and Latins were acquainted with it, at least as well as we

we are; but they had no precise term whereby to describe it.

572. We must not confound simplicity with bluntness. The latter is a flight of imagination, which escapes us unawares, and sometimes to our prejudice. Simplicity, on the contrary, is the language of frankness, freedom, and ease.

573. A work of taste may contain four kinds of thoughts, which it is necessary to distinguish: *Plain or simple thoughts, natural thoughts, chosen thoughts, and forced thoughts.* These characteristics may be found in pictures, as well as in discourses.

574. The ancients seem to have employed three principal means, to attain that simplicity in which they have often excelled; the brevity of the signs, the manner of arranging them, and the way of combining them together.

575. The art of transitions is very difficult, especially to those who are not sufficiently masters of their subject, who have not gone deep enough into it, to know all its parts and articulations. From hence arises the great number of forced and shocking transitions.

576. Simplicity includes warmth, energy, and vivacity. When the thoughts are conveyed in few words, and in due order, they have that fire, that victorious light, which enlightens and enflames at the same time.

577. The

577. The *French* tongue, though more confined in its constructions than the Greek and Latin languages, has marvellously obeyed the great writers of the age of Lewis XIV. who have left us master-pieces in every kind.

578. Imitation of good authors, does not consist in plagiarism, nor in a stile formed of slips of all sorts of colours: A man must store his mind with his models, raise himself to their tone, and wait for the moments of rapture; which is no less essential in eloquence than in poetry.

XL.

Of PRONUNCIATION.

579. We cannot read in company, and much less speak in public, if we are not well versed in the rules of *Pronunciation*. The first of these rules consists in *clearness*. To this end, we must speak slowly, distinguish the sounds, not neglect the finals, separate the words, the syllables, sometimes even certain letters, that might be confounded together, or by their jarring, produce a bad sound; stop at the points and commas, and wheresoever clearness and sense require it.

580. In the second place, the pronunciation must be easy and flowing. The moment the orator is in pain, the audience suffer.

581. Thirdly,

581. Thirdly, we must assume the tone that suits with what we are saying. As there is a vast variety in these tones, it is very difficult to point out their differences, and lay down rules for them. Yet it seems they may be reduced to three kinds; the familiar tone, the nervous tone, and a third, which may be called the middle tone, on account of the medium it keeps between the other two.

582. The familiar tone, is that of common conversation. It neither affects harmony, nor runs into monotony. It consists in gentle and simple inflexions. The nervous tone, is that which is used in delivering weighty discourses, or in reading very serious works. The voice is always full, the syllables are pronounced with a sort of melody: The inflections are never varied but with dignity. The middle tone has a little more preparation than the familiar, and a little less than the nervous or supported tone. These three species of tones have each their degrees, in which there is more or less energy, according to the subject, the actors, the audience, and the places.

583. The ancients had, on the tones of voice, and on gestures, a collection of precepts, which formed an art, and served as rules for speaking in public. They even thought that this part was one of the most considerable, in the art of persuading and affecting.

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fecting. It is well known, that *Demosthenes* reduced to action alone all the parts of the orator.

584. Action, or declamation, is a sort of corporal eloquence, an expression that consists in the gestures, and in the tones of the voice. This species of elocution has, as well as the language of words, its elements. In like manner it has its simplicity and copiousness: It has its particular harmony with each object: and a general one with the whole subject. It has its melody, its numbers, its variations, its decency; in fine, it has its deficiencies and excesses.

585. There are three sorts of gestures; some *imitative*, as when we counterfeit the tones or the manners of any person; others *indicative*, which only point out a place, a thing, or a person; and, in fine, there are *affecting* gestures, which paint the actions of the soul, and impress them on the spectators.

586. The *affecting* gesture, is the picture of the soul. 'Tis this that puts life in a discourse, and alone makes eloquence triumph. It takes in all the attitudes of the body, and all its motions, without any exception.

587. There is no passion, not an emotion of any passion, not a single part of this emotion, but what has its particular gesture and tone, its modulation, its degrees of gestures and

and tones. There is no orator without his peculiar gestures, and his individual tones, to express this emotion. In fine, there is no auditor, if he is a man, but is capable of seizing this expression, and feeling its justness.

588. *Decency* extends to every thing the author says and does. It shews him what is required of him by the subject he handles, the place he is in, the audience that listen to him, the thought he expresses, and lastly, his age and quality. 'Tis this also that regulates the tone and gesture.

589. Of all the emotions, the most decent and the most eloquent, is that which discovers the confidence of the orator, in the goodness of his cause, and his certainty of presenting it in a manner that shall persuade those he is speaking to. 'Tis this emotion, that constitutes what is called the *tone of authority*, when the orator, master of his subject, and master of himself, appears confident without pride, and relies on himself for success.

590. There is no art, but what requires some powers; but, if there be any one that particularly requires, and is deserving of them, 'tis that of the orator, called to speak in public, and present truth in a victorious manner.

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XII.

OF RECITAL.

591. *Recital*, is an exact and faithful declaration of any event. If it delivers more or less, it is not exact; if it sets it forth in any other manner, it is not faithful.

592. Every *Recital* is the portrait of the event that is the subject of it. The painter employs natural and imitative signs, which are features and colours. The historian makes use of arbitrary and instituted signs, which are words. Both, when they mix fiction with truth, act like poets, at least in the feigned part of their works.

593. *Recital* is in its full beauty and perfection, when to faithfulness and exactness, it joins brevity, plainness, and such a sort of interest as is suitable to it.

594. There are three kinds of *Recital*, the *oratorical*, the *historical*, and the *familiar*. . . Notice has been taken of the first and third; in what we have said of oration and apologue, so that our present business is with historical recitalism.

595. This has as many characteristics, as there are sorts of histories. There is the history of mankind, considered in their relations to,

to, or connections with, the Deity; this is the history of *Religion*: The history of mankind, in their dealings and connections together, we call *Prophane* history; and lastly, There is *Natural* history, whose object is the productions of nature, its phenomena, and its variations.

XLII.

Of the HISTORY of RELIGION.

596. This history is subdivided into two species, one of which is *Sacred* history, written by inspired men; the other is *Ecclesiastical* history, written by men assisted only by the light of nature.

597. The sacred books, display history to us in all its grandeur and nobleness. There we find the sublime, mixed with the simple, the most moving recitals, the purest plainness, the most persuasive air of sincerity. We perceive that the sacred authors had every thing present before their eyes, and that their recital is arranged conformably to the matter in hand.

598. Sacred history is not designed to serve as a model to writers; but to teach man what he is, how he ought to act, and to what he ought to tend, according to the views of God:

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And

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And yet there is nothing more perfect extant in the historical kind. It is exact, faithful, true, simple, without passion: 'Tis truth itself that speaks, without disguise, and without studied preparation.

599. Ecclesiastical, differs from prophane history, only in the object. The writer, left to himself, has no resources but in his learning and his talents, to discover truth, and set it forth to others. But as he treats of matters in which religion is concerned, he is obliged, more than any other, to bring into his recital that spirit of simplicity and plainness, which a doctrine averse to ostentation and vanity requires. Mr. *Fleury* may be proposed as a model in this way of writing.

XLIII.

Of PROPANE HISTORY.

600. Prophane history, is the picture of past centuries, presented to future ages, for their instruction. In this we see a perpetual representation of revolutions in human affairs, of origins and dissolutions of empires, of manners, of opinions incessantly succeeding one another; in fine, of all that rapid, though insensible motion, which carries away every thing,

thing, and is continually changing the face of the earth.

601. There are *general* history, and *particular* history. General history, properly so called, should be the history of mankind, dispersed over the inhabitable earth from the beginning of the world. It should contain the main substance of all the histories of nations, reduced to an extent proportionate to the whole body of the work. We should see in it not only the co-temporary concatenations of the causes and effects on the theatre of the world, but also the seeds and shoots, more or less developed, of the catastrophes reserved for subsequent ages.

602. It is impossible to have such a history; but the celebrated *Bassuet* has traced a truly valuable sketch of it, in which his design is to shew, that all the revolutions in human affairs have been subordinate to the design which God had formed to found a religion destined for restoring man to his rights.

603. What we call particular history, in opposition to the general history of the world, may be general by opposition to other histories whose object is less extensive. Such is the history of a kingdom with respect to that of a province; of a province with respect to that of a city, &c.

Q 2 604. The

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604. The more extensive the field of history is, the smaller the objects must appear. It behoves the writer to place himself in the true point of view of his work, and properly graduate the proportion of each object in his picture, according to the rules of perspective.

605. The histories of empires and kingdoms, ought to be written by none but philosophers or ministers; or rather by philosophers that have exercised the ministerial functions; because they are the only writers capable of laying open, with equal success, the sports and whims of the passions, and the springs of politics.

606. *Xenophon, Thucydides, Tacitus, Livy*, are men of this class; and, accordingly, in their hands history retains part of its original characteristic, which is to envelope morality and policy, under the cover of facts. Among the moderns, no man is more worthy to be compared with them than *Mr. de Thou*.

X 607. Some histories are confined to one single important event, such as *Catiline's* conspiracy, that of *Walstein*, the revolution of *Portugal*, &c. In these separate histories the historian must, at setting out, acquaint the reader with the times, places, manners, interests, and characters; then present, in the midst of all these circumstances, the seed or bud of the event to be related; follow its unfoldings

foldings and progresses, and lead it on to its end. These pieces of history are very agreeable, because with the merit of truth they participate of the qualities of poetry.

608. Certain histories may retain this name, though they are confined to the life of one single man. Such are the histories of *Alexander the Great*, *Cicero*, *Lewis XI.* Cardinal *Rich-lieu*, *Lewis XIV.* &c. But in these we must consider the statesman more than the private man, otherwise they will be only *lives*.

609. The ancients had a particular taste for writing *lives*. *Cornelius Nepos*, *Suetonius*, *Plutarch*, preferred this kind of recital to prolix histories. The design of the latter, was calculated to engage the attention of philosophical minds; that is, to make parallels of men who shone in the same sphere. We have in *French*, a crowd of works under the title of *Lives*, or *Memoirs*, among which we must be very careful in making a proper choice. The *Lives of illustrious Frenchmen*, begun by Mr. *du Castre d'Auvigny*, and continued by *Abbé Perrault*, deserve particular attention.

610. The texture of history ought naturally to be in the indirect form, i. e. the historian must relate what has been done or said by the actors he introduces on the scene, and not make them speak themselves. Yet historians, as they gradually perfected their art,

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have borrowed something of the poetical manner, and turned into dramatic the too monotonial form of their recital.

611. Historians sometimes take upon themselves to compose the speeches that have been made on important occasions. *Livy* abounds with such harangues. They are read with pleasure; yet they cast a blemish on the exact fidelity which ought to reign in history. The same may be said of those characters, or portraits, which turn certain historical works, into real galleries of painting, where unfortunately we behold almost nothing but pictures drawn by fancy. Reflections too much unfolded, and moral or political discussions, also deviate from the end of history.

612. Chronology is a light which history follows step by step. The president *Henault* has published a work in the way of annals, which has all the perfections of history; namely, his *Chronological Abridgment of the History of France*, from which several other writers have made abridgments in the same taste. 'Tis he also that put in action an interesting part of the history of *France*, relative to the reign of *Francis II.*

613. There must be no oratorical figures in history, because such figures are made to work upon the passions. Now, a true historian has no passions; he has neither friends nor foes,

nor

nor relations, nor country. He has nothing to prove, nor to controvert; he neither accuses nor defends.

614. The principal quality of the historical stile, is to be rapid. The historian hastens to the event. This stile should also be adequate to the subject. A general history is not written in the same strain as a particular history: It is almost a dialogue uniformly kept up; it is more periodical and numerous. The works of Abbé de Vertot, are esteemed for models in this kind. X

XLIV.

Of NATURAL HISTORY.

615. According to the division made by Chancellor Bacon, *Natural History* is divided into three branches, the first of which concerns the regular works of nature, *i. e.* those in which the ordinary laws of nature seem to have been followed; the second is its irregularities, *i. e.* the works in which nature seems to have deviated from its usual walk; the third is the arts, *i. e.* the works in which nature is employed or imitated by man's industry.

616. *Natural History* chiefly serves to raise our minds from the consideration of the creature
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ture to the knowledge of the Creator: It presents to us the universe as the temple of the deity; it shews us the attributes of the Supreme Being, his wisdom, his power, his goodness, his providence, engraved every where.

617. This sort of history affords the greatest helps to agriculture, commerce, medicine, and all the arts. It shews us the products of different climates; it gives us new ideas, in regard to employing what materials we have; it links nations together by a reciprocal communication of their riches; it makes us inhabitants of all places, as civil history renders us co-temporaries of all ages.

618. *Aristotle, Theophrastus, and Pliny*, are the principal ancients that have wrote upon *Natural History*. The work of the latter, is as variegated as nature. It includes, besides the history of animals, plants, and minerals, the history of the heavens and the earth; medicine, commerce, navigation; the history of the liberal and mechanic arts; the origin of customs; in fine, all human arts and sciences.

619. In our days, we may go much farther, with the help of the researches made by modern naturalists, and the immense collections in the cabinets of princes and of some rich persons whose taste turned that way, adding

ding thereto the memoirs collected by learned men and travellers. All these materials enable our age to possess a natural history more copious, more rational, and more complete, than all that has yet appeared. This is the task which Messrs. *de Buffon* and *d'Anbenton*, are actually proceeding in with great applause.

XLV.

Of the EPISTOLARY STYLE.

620. The *Epistolary* kind, is nothing else but the oratorical genus lowered to simple conversation; and accordingly, there are as many species of letters as there are kinds of orations.

621. In a letter we counsel, we dissuade, exhort, comfort, petition, recommend, reconcile, discuss; and then it is of the deliberative kind. We accuse, complain, threaten, demand satisfaction for injuries; this is the judicial kind. We praise, blame, recite, congratulate, give thanks, &c. and this is the demonstrative kind.

622. There are two sorts of letters; some that may be called *philosophical*, where we handle in a free way, some subject belonging to the sciences, or to literature: The others

may

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may be called *familiar*, and are nothing but a sort of conversation between absent persons.

623. The style of the latter must resemble that of a conversation, such as it would be with the person himself, were he present. In philosophical letters, which are properly dissertations, or discourses addressed to a friend, we sometimes rise with the matter according to the circumstances.

624. We write in a plain style, to persons who are most above us, but not in a familiar one. Familiarity supposes a certain friendly connection, a free and frequent communication with the persons, a sort of equality, by virtue of which we do not cramp ourselves discourse.

625. *Balzac's* Bombastic Style, and *Voiture's* Jovial Humour, have had their admirers and imitators; but in our days, scarce any body condescends to read those authors, who indeed ran into two vicious extremes.

626. The simple style seems easy to be imitated, because the words are rightly adapted, and the turns are ingenuous: Yet it is a very rare thing to reach the perfection of this style. *Madam de Maintenon's* letters are in this respect almost as perfect as it is possible for any to be.

627. No body has more highly united elegance and natural graces, than *Madam de Sevigny*

Sevigny has done. Her letters abound with unexpected strokes, for which she was indebted to the fertility of her genius, and her happy turn of wit.

628. The Epistolary stile, admits all figurative words and thoughts; but it admits them in its own manner, by presenting them only as the expressions of nature.

629. Sprightliness may diffuse itself on all sorts of objects, however serious or melancholy they may be: There is always a manner of speaking gracefully of them. But we must be extremely reserved in point of pleasantry, because it is never good but in its right place; and in letters it is difficult to succeed happily in it. It is still more dangerous to indulge ourselves in jests, because they most frequently have a tincture of malignity.

630. The most essential thing for speaking well, and consequently for writing well, is to know ourselves, and the person we are speaking to. A due sense of this, regulates what we are to say, and how it should be said: It dictates the objects and the expressions. But it is extremely difficult to seize all the relations in which we stand, and keep ourselves in the single point that answers thereto.

631. When nothing is intended but to praise, or congratulate, the pen may glide on freely. Delicate ears are indeed fond of ingenious turns,

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turns, in compliments addressed to them; but even when they are void of such turns, it is easily pardoned for the sake of the good intention.

632. When we are upon business, embroidery is dangerous. Fit terms, simple turns, and brevity especially, are seasonable here. Say what must be said, say it well, and say that only.

633. The heart, when it is dictating a letter, moves quicker than the pen. But, when it is under any constraint, the mind flags; we are barren, nothing occurs. In these moments of disgrace, we must have recourse to art, reflect upon what we would write, represent to ourselves the person to whom we write, and wind ourselves up to the tone which we know will succeed with him. This is what *Madam de Sevigny* called *labouring*.

634. The reading of good models, may greatly help to form one's style; but we should not servilely stick to any model. If we have but a few peculiar and natural graces, they are always more valuable than those that are borrowed.

635. It is scarce possible to compose a letter by rule: 'Tis sentiment alone that gives law, and sentiment alone does not always well agree with rules, unless the latter relax.

636. Pro-

636. Prolixity makes letters tiresome, and refinements throw obscurity into them. It is better to be concise than languid, and to make the thoughts somewhat strong, rather than leave them without consistence.

637. The letters of the learned sometimes favour of study and erudition; every thing there is accurate and regular: But this accurateness is often attended with stiffness and dryness.

638. Young people give a loose to needless details; they write as it were for themselves, without scarcely thinking of the person they are writing to. 'Tis an endless babbling.

639. Love letters are still more prolix. The passionate strain that runs through them, renders them interesting, and even affecting, when the graces of the mind and stile heighten the vivacity of the sentiment. The *Letters of a Portuguese Nun*, those of *Boursault to Betty*, the *Peruvian Letters*, &c. are a proof of this.

640. Negotiators have left several collections of important letters, wherein they give an account of their ministry, and shew the events in which they were concerned, the states where they negotiated, and the potentates they had to deal with.

641. The epistolary form, is used in a great number of fugitive pieces, where the
R
subject

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subject treated of is relative to the sciences, the Belles-Lettres, Criticism, Arts, &c. Some journalists also give their extracts in this manner.

642. Courtiers commonly speak with ease and dignity in their letters. With them every thing assumes a certain agreeableness, which is like the air of the country they inhabit.

643. It is said, that we ought to write as we speak, but that is upon condition we speak well: Nay, perhaps, we are obliged to write a little better than we speak, even when we really talk well.

XLVI.

Of TRANSLATION.

644. *Translating* ancient authors, is, if not the sole, at least the simplest, the shortest, and the surest means of being well versed in them, and learning their language.

645. A translation should exactly represent the original; it must be neither too free, nor too servile; it must neither stray into long periphrases, which weaken the ideas, nor stick too close to the letter, which extinguishes the sentiment.

646. In *translating*, there is no great difficulty to understand the author's thought; but the

the business is to represent, in another language, the objects, the thoughts, the expressions, the turns, the tones of a work; and this from a rigorous model that must be expressed with an easy air.

647. There is required, if not as much genius, at least as much taste, to translate well as to compose: Nay, perhaps, a little more. The translator, is master of nothing; he is obliged to follow his author every where, and to bend to all his variations, with infinite suppleness.

648. Whoever intends to translate, must thoroughly know the genius of the two languages he is going to handle, study the difference of their construction, and what are the causes of what we call Gallicism, Latinism, &c.

649. The Latins make inversions when they please; but, though no law seems to subject them, their language constantly follows the oratorical order, and 'tis doubtless on this account that it has so much fire, so much force, so much passion, being assisted in its walk by all the impetuosity of the heart, which follows it in the same direction.

650. In the *French* tongue, the natural order is an invariable and inflexible rule. But if what has just been said of the Latin tongue be true, what we call order, is a subversion

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of order. When we go to the bottom of things, we see the *French* depart from the walk of the *Latins*, but only when the cases fail them, or they are encumbered by too great a multiplicity of articles and auxiliaries.

651. Hence it follows, that the *French* ought to fall into the same order as the *Latins*, as often as they are not hindered by the above reasons. Thus all the *Latin* constructions are not strangers in *French*, nor all the *French* constructions strangers in *Latin*.

652. A *Latinism* happens in *French*, only when we follow in it the *Latin* constructions which *French* cannot come into with a good grace; and a *Gallicism*, in like manner is found in *Latin*, when they employ in it the construction which *French* owes only to its peculiar constitution.

653. The first principle in *Translation*, is to leave the turns of phrase just as they are in the author, when they equally suit both languages. To this may be added, the following particular rules.

654. I. The translator must not touch the order of things, whether they be facts, or argumentations; since this order is the same in all languages, and belongs to the nature of man, rather than to the particular genius of nations.

655. II. We

655. II. We must also preserve the order of the ideas, or at least of the members, as we are to suppose the author has had a reason, however imperceptible it may be, to make choice of one arrangement rather than another.

656. III. We must preserve the periods; however long they may be; because a period is only a thought compounded of several other thoughts, which are combined together by intrinsical affinities. If we break or divide the phrases, we shall retain the thoughts, but we shall have them without the affinities which determine the sense of the period.

657. IV. All the conjunctions must remain. They are like the articulations of the members; they cannot be changed, neither in sense nor place.

658. V. All the adverbs should remain placed with the verb, before or after, as harmony permits or requires.

659. VI. Symmetrical phrases, must be rendered with their symetry, or something equivalent. Symetry in discourse, is the analogy between several ideas, or several expressions. Symetry in expression, may consist in the sounds, in the quantity of the syllables, in the termination, or the length of the words, or in the arrangement of the members.

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660. VII. Brilliant thoughts, in order to retain the same degree of lustre, must have nearly the same extent in the words: If they are contracted, we obscure them; if they are extended, we tarnish their splendor.

661. VIII. The figures in thoughts must be preserved, because thoughts are the same in all minds: They may every where fall into the same order. As to figures in words, their place may commonly be supplied by equivalents; if not, we must endeavour to adapt the figure to some other idea more susceptible of it.

662. IX. Proverbs, which are popular maxims, and consist almost of one word, must be rendered by other proverbs, or by phrases so natural, as to deserve to become proverbs.

663. X. All paraphrases are vicious: 'Tis not translating, 'tis commenting. Yet, when there is no other way to make the sense known, necessity is the translator's excuse.

664. XI. In fine, we must entirely abandon the manner or form of the text we are translating, when the sense requires it for the sake of clearness, or the sentiment for vivacity, or harmony for agreeableness.

665. Besides these principles, which are common to all kinds of works translated, there are others that suit only the particular species,
and

and these species may be reduced to three, which are history, eloquence, and poetry.

666. When we translate an historian, it is not enough that we stick to the genius of history; we must also follow, as close as possible, the genius of the author. *Sallust, Tacitus, Livy, Caesar, Quintus Curtius, Cornelius Nepos*, have each their peculiar characters. If the translator is not careful to render all these characters, he parodies rather than translates.

667. In eloquence, every thing must turn towards persuasion, and go on with dignity. We must unfold the ideas, give them a certain extent, susceptible of number and harmony, and capable of bearing the action of the orator. To which should be joined the rapture, more or less strong, of a man that aims at captivating the consent of his hearers.

668. In poetry, this rapture is a fire that blazes out in strictures or images. But a perfect translation of poets is impossible, whether we attempt it in verse or in prose. Prose can render neither the number, nor the measure, nor the harmony, which are the great poetical beauties: And if we attempt the translation in verse, supposing we retain the number, the measure, the harmony, we alter the thoughts, the expressions, the turns. By a happy chance, we may render two, three, or

four

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four verses; but all the rest will be faint, and the fruit of an unhappy effort.

669. In prose, there is a way of translating poets with some success, and giving a pretty good turn to the poetical strain, which is the principal characteristic of verse, provided we adhere to these three points, 1. Give the ideas, just as they are, due weight, if possible, or at least endeavour to come up to something equivalent; 2. Leave the ideas, if it can be done, or at least the parts of propositions and phrases, in their proper places; 3. Connect the thoughts as the author does, point like him, render period for period, divide the phrases when he divides them, &c. This indisputably requires much attention, but the effort is not so great as may be thought.

XLVII.

Of the principal FRENCH TRANSLATORS.

670. There are but few translations of poets in verse that deserve notice. *Segrais's Æneid*, and *Brebeuf's Pharsalia*, are the principal ones. Besides, detached pieces of *Horace*, *Ovid*, &c. have been translated, and are daily translating, with more or less success.

671. Good

671. Good translations of poets in prose, are not much more common. All those of *de Marolles* and *Martignac*, are rejected as lumber. We have *Abbé des Fontains's* *Virgil*, the *Metamorphoses* of *Ovid*, by *Abbé Banier*, the *Horace* of father *Tarteron* and *Abbé Batteux*, &c. to which may be associated Mr. *de Bougainville's* fine translation of the *Anti-Lucretius*.

672. Almost all the Latin authors, who have written in prose, exist in translation. *Amyot* and *Coeffeteau*, were in high repute in their time. If *Du Ryer* had not wrote for bread, he would have equalled them. The second age of translation, was that of Messrs. *de Vaugelas* and *d'Ablancourt*, to whom we may join Mr. and Madam *Dacier*. In the third and last age, we find Messrs. *de Touerriil*, *Gedoy*, *Terrasson*, the Abbés *Mongault*, and *Prevot d'Exiles*; but they have been in some measure eclipsed by the *Abbé d'Olivet*, who has carried the talent of translation as far as it seems capable of going.

673. Besides the Latin authors, we have excellent French translations of divers works in English, Italian, &c. We shall here mention no more of them, than *Pope* translated in verse, by *Abbé du Resnel*, and in prose, by Mr. *de Silhouette*; *Paradise Lost*, translated by Mr. *Du*

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Du pré de St. Maur, and afterwards by Mr. *Racine*; *Tasso* by Mr. *Mirabaud*, &c *.

XLVIII.

Of JOURNALS.

674. Extracts from books and from the chief discoveries of every kind, have been deemed a proper means to diffuse a knowledge thereof among the public. This way of writing was unknown to the ancients, and there is nothing extant, but the *Library of Photius*, that has any affinity with it.

675. Journals took their rise in France, and cannot yet be reckoned an hundred years old. The gazettes † that preceeded them, having begun in 1631, Mr. *de Sallé*, counsellor in the parliament of Paris, is the first that had an idea of Journals; *an idea so new and so happy, and which still subsists to this day, with more vigour than ever, accompanied by a numerous posterity.* These are the expressions of Mr. *de Fontenelle*, in the eulogy of Abbé *Gallois*.

* I have hitherto constantly used Abbé *de Bateux*'s tracts, and as they have been much farther made use of, than I insinuated in a note at the beginning, I think myself obliged to acknowledge it.

† *Gazetta*, is the name of a small Venetian coin, for which they formerly had the sheet of news.

676. The

676. The *Journal of the Learned*, begun by Mr. de Sallo in 1665, is the only one that has hitherto had an uninterrupted duration, or whose interruptions did not prevent its being continued. It was under the direction of Abbé Gallois, from 1666 to 1674, inclusive; under that of Abbé de la Roque, from 1675 to 1686; under that of the president Cousin from 1687, to 1701; and since 1702, it has been carried on by a society, which was instituted by Abbé Bignon, and is now under the chancellor's protection.

677. The *Memoirs of Trevoux*, began with this century, and are still in being. They are composed by Jesuits, and have always been charged with much partiality; but where shall we find journals quite secure from this reproach? However, they contain excellent pieces, whether we regard the main substance, or the turn of them.

678. Mr. Bayle has excelled in the knack of a journalist. His *Intelligence from the Republic of Letters*, which make eleven volumes in duodecimo, are truly a model in this kind.

679. We may almost place in the same rank, Mr. Bernard, who gave his journals the same title as those of Mr. Bayle, Mr. Basnage de Bauval, who has given a *History of the works of the Learned*, in twenty-four volumes 12mo. and Mr. Le Clerc, whose three journals, in-
titled

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X titled the *Universal Library*, *Select Library*, and *Ancient and Modern Library*, form a series of eighty-four volumes.

680. Mr. *de la Chapelle*, has been one of the ablest journalists of these latter times. His first composition of this kind, was the *English Library*, which may be considered, as a sequel of the *Literary Memoirs of Great Britain*, by Mr. *de la Roche*, and was in its turn, followed by a *British Library*. He afterwards had the principal share in conducting the *Rational Library*, which he dropt towards the end, in order to publish the *New Library*. In all these journals, there is a great deal of erudition and sound criticism.

681. The *Literary Journal* of the Hague, has been composed by divers authors, of whom the most known are Messrs. *de St. Hyacinthe* and *Van Effen*. *Du Sauzet*, a bookseller, gave the *French Library*, and Mr. *La Barre de Beaumarchais*, the *serious and humorous Letters*, productions of an inferior rank.

682. Abbé *des Fontaines*, made himself famous by the sarcastical critique with which he filled that long series of periodical papers, published under divers titles, the principal of which is, *Observations on modern Writings*. He was a man of great wit and talents; but he gave too great a loose to passion, or rather to humour. Those that now continue his work,
are

are much inferior to him in point of capacity; and their critique is a real satire, which has entirely brought them into disrepute.

683. The *Impartial Library*, begun in 1750, was ended in 1758, and makes a series of eighteen volumes in octavo. I composed, singly, the first volumes of it; but particular reasons afterwards induced me to drop the direction of this journal, and content myself with furnishing the best part of the extracts.

684. The *Germanic Library* was begun in 1720, under the direction of Mr. l'Enfant. When it finished at the 50th volume, Messrs. de Beausobre, senior, de Mauclerc, and myself, engaged in it. The two latter, afterwards composed the *Literary Journal of Germany*, of which only four parts appeared. After this, they set up the *New Germanic Library*, to which being left the sole author, I put my name in the beginning of 1750. This work was concluded at the end of the year 1759, having also fifty parts, like the old one, but divided into twenty-five tomes.

685. There are already eighteen tomes, or thirty-six parts, of the *Library of Sciences and Fine Arts*, which was printed at the Hague, and is a very good journal.

686. The *Oeconomical and Literary Intelligencer*, is also reckoned a very well executed collection,

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collection, thirty tomes of which are extant.

687. Of all the journals written in other languages, we shall only mention the *Acta Eruditorum* of *Leipsick*, which both for duration and merit, may be put in competition with the *Journal of the Learned*.

688. *Mercuries* hold a rank inferior to journals. The oldest and most known, is the *Mercury of France*, which sometime went under the title of *Mercure Galant*. The goodness of this collection, commonly depends on the talents of its conductor. Mr. *de Boissy*, lately put it on a very good footing; and Mr. *Marmontel*, who has now the direction of it, seems destined to bring it to all the perfection it is susceptible of.

689. The too great number of journals, and the extreme partiality of their authors, have much discredited them. A man must have great talents to please all sorts of readers; and it is impossible to please all authors, who, generally speaking, cannot bear with the most judicious and most decent criticisms.

XLIX.

Of DICTIONARIES.

690. A *Dictionary* is a series of words ranged in alphabetical order, with an intent to explain

plain the terms of a language, or to give a description of places, the lives of illustrious men, definitions and examples relative to sciences, arts, &c. In short, there is scarce any thing but what has been subjected to the form of a *Dictionary*; and the abuse has been carried still farther herein, than with regard to journals.

691. *Dictionaries* that are destined to shew the state of living languages, cannot be of constant utility, unless those languages remain fixed. Hence it is that we have old *French Dictionaries*, which are of no use but to those who will read books written at the time when those *Dictionaries* were compiled.

692. The *Dictionary of the French Academy*, is a sort of code of the language. It has been considerably improved in the second and third editions. Of the four volumes it consists of, the two first are for the language, and the others for the arts. The latter are properly the works of *Thomas Corneille*.

693. While the academy were collecting their materials for the first, *Euretiere* published his *Dictionary*, which, by since undergoing corrections and alterations from several hands, is become one of best in its kind. It contains many more things than the academy's *Dictionary*, and thereby it is of more extensive use.

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694. Another writer, named *Richelet*, also gave the public a *Dictionary*, which was pretty well esteemed, and which, from one volume in *Quarto*, has swelled to three *Folio* volumes, by the additions made to it by other editors.

695. The *Dictionary of Trevoux* is a vast compilation, but not in great request.

696. There is no *Dictionary* of facts more extensive than that of *Moreri*. It has received continual augmentations, which have brought the last edition made in *Holland*, to eight volumes in *Folio*. They have laboured to purge it of many faults it abounded with; but in this they have succeeded but very imperfectly. *Abbé Goujet* has made supplements to the *Paris* edition, as the pastor *Rogues* has also done to that of *Basil*.

697. The most celebrated of all *Dictionaries*, is, indisputably, that of *Bayle*. This writer made use of that form, in order to exhaust immense collections, which he made in the course of his reading, but especially to make a parade of a multitude of objections against all the fundamental truths, and to build upon the ruins of those truths, the pyrrhonism with which he was possessed. This *Dictionary*, is one of those books that have done much, and will still do more, mischief in the world. The last editions consist of four volumes in *folio*; to which Mr. *de Chaufepied* has made a supplement

of four volumes, similar in number and form, but very different with respect to the principles and turn of genius.

698. An enumeration of all the *Dictionaries* whose object is particular sciences, as geography, medicine, chemistry, &c. would lead us too far; but we cannot pass over in silence, the *Encyclopædia*, which, after having been carried on to seven volumes in *Folio*, has lately been suppressed. The plan of this work was excellent; first-rate pens were employed in it. But the want of discretion in handling several articles, where the matter is of the utmost importance, fully justifies the government's measures on this occasion. We can only wish to see this work continued and finished, in a manner more suitable to public utility.

L.

OF ACADEMIES, and their Works.

699. *Italy* has been the cradle of the first literary *Academies*. That of the *Humorists* at *Rome*, is one of the most ancient. There is now scarce a considerable city in *Italy*, without one or more of them, and they usually assume very singular names.

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700. The

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700. The *French Academy*, whose dictionary we have already mentioned, is the most distinguished of all those of the same kind. It owes its origin to Cardinal *Richlieu*, and was established by the king's letters-patent in 1635. Its members are confined to the number of forty, and great interest is always made for vacant places in it.

701. Besides its *Dictionary*, the *French Academy* has printed nothing but the speeches made on the days of receiving new members, which now form a numerous series of volumes, but few persons read them.

702. There are likewise many collections of the academy of *Jeux Floraux*, at *Toulouse*, which are but little more in vogue, though they sometimes contain pieces worthy of attention. The same may be said of what has been published by the *Academies* of *Marseilles*, *Montauban*, &c.

703. To the custom of strewing flowers on the tombs of deceased academicians, we are indebted for the *Eulogies* of Mr. *de Fontenelle*, which are of a quite new kind, and inimitable. Every thing that has been published by this illustrious writer, the Nestor of the *Academies* of this age, cannot fail of being transmitted down to the latest posterity.

704. The *Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres*, is another society very much distinguished

guished by the learning of its members, and the value of the works it has published. It took its rise in 1663, but did not receive its academical form till 1701. Its memoirs appear successively in *Quarto*, like those of the *Academy of Sciences*.

705. This last *Academy*, and the many others of the same kind actually existing, are no part of our plan. We shall only observe, that the *Royal Academy of Prussia*, also takes in the *Belles-Lettres*, which are the object of its fourth class, as may be seen in the thirteen volumes of its memoirs, published since the year 1744.

706. The *Academies of Belles-Lettres*, serve to improve taste, as do those of sciences to enlarge human knowledge. These societies, are therefore very useful; but they would be much more so if all their members concurred with the same activity towards public utility; and if, among those who have this activity, emulation did not too frequently degenerate into base envy.

LI.

Of ABRIDGEMENTS.

707. The immense extent of the objects of our knowledge, and the narrow limits of the

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the human mind, oblige us to reduce what deserves to be known, within a compass that will admit of our bestowing no more time upon it than we can afford.

708. There are two sorts of *Abridgements*, or two uses to be made of them. They serve to prepare the mind of those that have not yet learnt any thing, by furnishing them with the elementary lights; or else they recall to the mind and the memory of those that have gone through the whole course of any science, the summary and the essential part of that science.

709. Good *Abridgements* are very rare, because they require a thorough knowledge of the matter on which they rest; to which must be added, that discernment and precision which few men are endowed with, and the undergoing a painful labour which acquires us no great honour or reputation.

710. There is nothing but what may be abridged; religion, philosophy, geometry, history, geography: And the extent of those *Abridgements* varies more or less almost to infinity.

LII. OF ESSAYS.

711. The title of *Essays*, is one of the most common; and every author who has nothing but

but vague things to say upon a single subject, or on several, makes use of this denomination.

712. Taken in an accurate sense, it should indicate works in which we make, by ratiocination or experience, discoveries that are yet but sketched, either because their object resists our efforts, or that we want sufficient leisure, means, or faculties, to proceed farther.

713. Such *Essays* are very useful, and it is from their re-union, that complete theories are afterwards produced.

714. There are works which owe their title of *Essay* to nothing but the modesty of their authors, who might as well have called them *Treatises*, &c. Such, especially, is *Locke's* admirable *Essay on the human Understanding*. The *moral Essays of Nicole*, are very deep discussions, and those of *Mr. David Hume*, are master-pieces that will be handed down to posterity.

715. The name of *Essays* also suits miscellanies, or collections in the taste of those which the Latins called *Adversaria*. We range under a series of titles, all that we write on the divers matters expressed by those titles, and are subjected to no order, nor to any proportion between the parts of a similar whole.

716. Such in the main, is a certain book in great repute, which contains many singular things, energetically thought, and ingenuously

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X oufly expressed. These are *Montaigne's Essays*, one of the most attracting works that can be read, but which require knowledge and precaution in the reader, that he may not adopt several false or dangerous principles with which they abound.

LIII.

Of CHARACTERS.

717. 'Tis Mr. *de la Bruyere* that introduced this kind of work into literature, by adding to his translation of *Theophrastus's Characters*, those of the age he lived in. Besides the allusions that brought his book into vogue, the precision, the wit, and the strength that reign in it throughout, will always make it be considered as a master-piece of its kind.

718. All the works in which mankind are drawn, or wherein we especially search for the secret springs of their actions, whatever title they bear, belong to the class of *Characters*.

X 719. The best writings in this way, are the *Maxims* of the Duke *de la Rochefoucault*, the *Fallacy of human Virtues*, by Mr. *Esprit*, the *Considerations on the Manners of the present Age*, by Mr. *Du Clos*, and the *Essays* of *Abbé Trublet*.

720. There

720. There are two rocks to be avoided in works of this kind; one is, the saying things too common, or trivial; the other is, running into affectation and abstruseness. To these may be added a third, which consists in over-doing, exaggerating the corruption of man's heart, and refining upon things so far as to impute to mankind views and operations, which commonly neither enter into their heads, nor have any influence on their conduct.

LIV.

Of COUNSELS.

721. Writers, especially those that deal in morality, often disguise the dryness of their precepts, under this title. We have the *Counsels of Wisdom*, those of *Friendship*, &c. All books that invite men to practise any thing interesting or useful to them, may bear this title, whatever the subject may be.

722. Authors that follow this road, must conform to it, by assuming the true language of persuasion, and adorning their instructions with every thing that may convey them from the mind to the heart. The principal means to attain this end, are elegance of stile, an affecting strain, a happy choice of examples, and

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and such a variety of matter as may prevent our growing tired.

LV.

OF DIALOGUES.

723. *Dialogue*, is the most ancient species of writing: Yet *Plato*, by the pleasant dress in which he put this sort of conversations, deserves the honour of the invention. He brought *Dialogue* much in vogue, and almost all the philosophers of his time wrote no other way.

724. The Latins, who thought it an honour to imitate the Greeks, borrowed this way of writing from them. *Cicero*, though an orator, and consequently accustomed to connected discourses, thought philosophy could not appear to better advantage than in *Dialogue*: And accordingly we see, that most of his philosophical works are in this form.

725. *Cicero*, always replete with the most judicious views, handles the most difficult matters with an air of pleasantry that shews how much he is master of them. His imagination seems adapted to embellish truth, and to give it that measure of gracefulness, which corrects its dryness, without making it lose any thing of its energy.

726. *Lucian*

726. *Lucian* lived in the reign of *Trajan*, and beyond that of *Marcus Aurelius*. His *Dialogues* are satirical, and abound with poignant irony: He attacks all the sects of philosophy, and all religions. But his characteristic of incredulity is blameable, even in a Heathen; and he is also with reason accused of speaking of love in too gross a manner.

727. Among the moderns, who have composed *Dialogues*, *Mr. de Fontenelle* holds the first rank. The personages he introduces, speak with much wit; and the conclusion of each *Dialogue*, is some truth agreeably introduced and happily expressed. However, his conclusion is sometimes rather parade than truth. X

728. The *Dialogues* of *Mr. de Fenelon*, were intended for the instruction of his august pupil, and very well answer their destination. Those of *Mr. Redmond de St. Mard*, concern the passions, of which the author speaks very ingeniously, but with little accuracy. *Mr. Vernet's Socratical Dialogues* are in the true taste of *Socrates*. X

729. In general, the dialogical art is very difficult. Hence it is, that several works on the sciences, thrown into this form, are extremely insipid. The conversations of *Father Regnault, on Natural Philosophy*, for instance, are interspersed with merry conceits, that can-

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not but displease every sensible reader. A better taste prevails in the *Speſtacle de la Nature*, (*Nature diſplayed or delineated*); but the abridgements of the *Hiſtory of the Bees*, and that of the *Inſects*, by Mr. *Baſin*, come ſtill nearer to the true ſtrain of this ſort of works.

730. In order that a work may be ranked of the dialogical kind, it is not requiſite that the ſpeeches of the interlocutors be divided by their names, according to the dramatical form. It belongs to this kind, when once we ſuppoſe a converſation kept up between ſome perſons. Such are the *Worlds* of Mr. *de Fontenelle*, the *Newtonianism* of Count *Algarotti*, the converſations of Father *Bouhours*, *Abbé de Villars*, &c.

LVI.

Of SPIRIT.

731. This title has been much in faſhion for ſome time paſt, and the *Spirit of Laws* of the preſident *de Montesquieu*, has eſpecially given it a ſanction. This work, without being proof againſt a judicious critique, is one of the fineſt monuments of the ſtrength of the human mind.

732. When the buſineſs concerns things, we underſtand by *Spirit*, the elements, the fundamental

fundamental notions, the theory, and oftentimes even the scope of a doctrine. None but very philosophical geniusses, can labour with success in this kind of writing.

733. When the matter in question relates to persons, the spirit of an author is an arbitrary choice of those thoughts which are most pleasing to him who undertakes the care of making that choice. Such were the *Spirit* of *Montaign*, of *Fontenelle*, of *Voltaire*, &c.

734. The famous treatise of *Spirit*, is a quintessence of all the objections which have been made hitherto against the principles of morality and religion. The weakness of the objections thus united, renders that book more useful than dangerous to those who are capable of reflection.

LVII.

Of ALLEGORICAL LETTERS.

735. All those letters are called so, to which a foreign surname, especially an Oriental one, has been given, and in which we furnish men who observe for the first time, what passes in our own country, with arguments and reflections which contain the censure of opinions and manners.

736. The *Turkish Spy*, having preceded the *Persian Letters*, may in some measure have

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served as a model for them, but these are far superior as to the delicacy of their turns, and the depth of penetration.

737. The public has favourably received divers works in the same taste, some of which appeared at first periodically, as the *Jewish Letters*, &c. But insensibly this imitation, like all others, has degenerated into abuse. We must, however, distinguish from the crowd, the *Peruvian Letters* of Madam de Graigny.

738. To succeed in this way, much wit is required, in order to awaken the attention; a sufficient extent of knowledge, for the ground or substance of it; a solid judgment, to prevent that wit and knowledge from being lavished away; and much decency to suppress the inclination of hazarding things of too licentious a nature.

LVIII.

Of ROMANCES.

739. The *Milesian Fables* of antiquity, had a kind of distant likeness with what we now call *Romance*. Bishop *Heliodorus*, and *Achilles Tatius*, have produced works since, which come nearer still to the modern taste.

740. A *Romance*, is a kind of epic poem in prose, the fable of which is intended to instruct,

fruct, whilst it amuses by the recital of interesting events. In this point of view, *Romances* are not to be condemned: On the contrary, they deserve greater or less praise, according to their degree of perfection or utility. Such are the *Telemachus* of M. de Fenelon, the *Sethos* of the Abbé Terrasson, the *Travels of Cyrus*, of Mr. Ramsey, &c.

741. The great *Romances* of the last century, such as *Cyrus*, *Clelia*, *Cleopatra*, *Taromond*, are still more in the epic taste; but they are justly censured, for their prolixity, their affected stile, and a kind of love, which does not suit the heroes to whom it is attributed. In *Boileau's* works, may be seen the dialogue he wrote on that subject.

742. The *Princess of Cleves*, and *Zaide*, afford us the idea and model of works written with delicacy and decency, but which, nevertheless, cannot be looked upon otherwise than as frivolous.

743. *Romances* have greatly degenerated since that time, and are become miserable rhapsodies, or books dangerous to morals. A very small number of authors, have displayed more art in their compositions, such as the Abbé *Prevôt d'Exiles*, whose tragedy is moving, though over-strained, and who tires his readers by incredible romance; and M. de *Marivaux*, who has lavished much wit in adorn-

adorning small events, little interesting in themselves. It is not necessary that we should point out here, those who have contemned decency.

744. The *English* have afforded some time past, *Romances* of a new kind, which may be called minutiae. These are details carried to excess, from which, indeed, the characters appear to greater advantage; as in *Pamela*, *Grandison*, and *Clarissa*, but which require more patience than most readers are capable of.

LIX.

Of MYTHOLOGY.

745. *Mythology*, comprehends the knowledge of fable, and at the same time, of the religion of the Pagans; of the mysteries, ceremonies, and worships, with which they honoured their false deities.

746. To obtain a thorough knowledge of fable, we must have read with care, the poets, *Homer* and *Hesiod*, especially the tragic ones, who have drawn from thence the subject of their poems; and those who have made collections, either in verse, such as *Ovid*, or in prose, as *Antoninus Liberalis*, *Diodorus of Sicily*, *Apollodorus*, *Hyginus*, &c.

747. There are several sorts of fable; historical, physical, allegorical, moral, and some which

which are only simple apologues. The mythologist must, with extreme attention, endeavour to unravel and penetrate their different significations.

748. There is also much mythologic knowledge to be drawn from the works of the philosophers who lived in the beginning of Christianity, and from those of the fathers and apologists for the Christian religion, who were attacking them, or who were vindicating themselves from their calumnies.

749. There exists a crowd of authors who have published treatises, either on mythology in general, or on some subject relating to it, as *Van Dale* on the oracles, *Meursius* on the festivals, &c. The last and most esteemed of all the bodies of mythology, is that of the Abbé *Banier*, printed at *Paris* in 1738, in eight volumes in twelves. The mythological dictionary of the Abbé *de Claufre*, is also a very good one.

LX.

Of ANTIQUITIES and MEDALS.

750. The study of all the monuments of antiquity which have escaped the ravages of time, is equally vast and interesting, and serves to throw a light on manners, customs, and religious

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ligious ceremonies, and to elucidate facts, to fix dates, &c.

751. The finest collection that ever was written on Antiquities, is that of father *Montfaucon*, which, with the supplement, makes fifteen volumes in *folio*, and in which there are added, to very exact copper plates, the most solid explanations.

752. We call *Antiquarians* those who make it their business to explain the most celebrated inscriptions and monuments. There are some to be found in all cities where those monuments abound, and especially at Rome.

753. The discovery made of late, of the subterraneous city of *Herculaneum*, opens a vast field to the lovers of Antiquities, who received with no less pleasure the fine description of the *Ruins of Palmyra*.

754. Medals are monuments the most durable, and most useful for history and chronology. They are universally in taste; and there are abundance of cabinets more or less rich, in which princes and private persons have gathered collections of Medals.

755. Many authors have acquired great reputation by explaining Medals. The principal ones are *Goltzius*, *Fulvius Ursinus*, *Vaillant*, *Moret*, *Banduri*, *Occon*, *Liebe*, *M. de Spanheim*, &c. The best introduction to the knowledge of Medals, is that of father *Joubert*.
One

One may also read with advantage the treatise
On the Utility of Travelling, by M. Boudelot de
Dairval. X

756. We call *Metallic Histories*, those series
of Medals, with their explanations, which
have some affinity with the history of a coun-
try or of a prince, such as that of *Lewis XIV.*
by the Academy of Inscriptions, and that of
the United Provinces, by M. *van Loon*.

757. *Devices* and the *Inscriptions* belong to
the same kind. The first consist in the union
of an emblem with a sentence. One may
read the discourses of father *Bouhours* which
turn upon this subject, and add to them the
works of father *Menestrier*.

758. *Inscriptions* have been from their ori-
gin an abridgment of History, a kind of an-
nals. They are engraven on almost all the
public monuments, pyramids, obelisks, sta-
tues, mausoleums, &c. Vast collections of
them have been made by *Gruter*, *Reinesius*,
Fabretti, *Gudius*, *Muratori*, &c. The Mar-
bles of *Arondel* hold a distinguished rank in
this class.

759. Antiquity in general is a sea without
bottom or shore; every day it affords a new
supply of knowledge. But as this sort of study
inspires with a real passion those who apply
themselves to it, they ought to be upon their
guard, not to exaggerate too much the value
of

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of a knowledge, oftentimes more curious than useful.

LXI.

Of DIPLOMATICS.

760. *Diplomatics* explains the ancient Documents, and apply them to history, in discerning the false from the true ones. There is a vast number, of which the certitude cannot be ascertain'd but by that help.

761. As interest, and other motives have produced the supposition or falsification of documents, there was a necessity to draw from criticism, rules applicable to the examination of those peices.

762. The treatise of father *Mabillion* is the most extensive and most useful we have on this subject, which several learned Germans have also handled with success.

763. The seals set to public acts make still a kind of separate study, but which tends to the same end, viz the certainty of Historical facts.

764. There are vast collections of Diplomatics in which are gathered all the documents relating to a state, a province, or some particular foundation, or indowment. Most of those peices might have remain'd in the obscurity.

rity from whence they have been drawn, but the utility of some few of them, justifies the publication of the others.

LXII.

Of GENEALOGIES.

765. Genealogies may be consider'd in two lights, 1st. as they serve to keep families distinct from each other; and, 2dly, as proofs of the antiquity and splendor of the extraction.

766. Genealogies of the first order were in use among the Jews whilst they preserv'd a form of government. They belong'd on one side to the essential constitution of their State, where the patrimony was to be unalienable; and they coincided at the same time with the views of God with regard to the promised Messiah.

767. In our days Genealogies serve only to trace up noble families as high as possible, and to prove well their descent. But there oftentimes enters much of the chimerical, or even of the notoriously false, into what is call'd a *tree of consanguinity*.

768. There is not a sovereign, or a great house, but what have their genealogy carefully drawn up. Every province has also its *Nobiliary*. Mess. d'Hozier, father and son, labour'd for France, and Hubner for Germany.

769. Works

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769. Works which concern the greek or roman families, belong to antiquities. There was no such thing then, as what we now call *Nobility*.

LXIII.

Of HERALDRY.

770. Coats of arms are in some measure a short history of Families; they denote the different degrees of nobility, and the various affinities. They also sometimes allude to some brilliant Action.

771. The most judicious writers have fix'd the beginning of coats of arms towards the eleventh century. Travels beyond sea gave rise to them, and the tournaments brought them into vogue. No true coats of arms before the reign of *Lewis the young*, are to be met with.

772. It is to the French that we are beholden for Heraldry, they alone have brought it to an art: and it is in that language that all other nations blason their coats of arms. In the library of father *Menestrier* the names and titles of the works of the authors who have written upon Heraldry, are to be met with.

LXIV. Of

LXIV.

Of CRYPTOGRAPHY.

773. Among the antients, the art of writing with notes, was a fixed method to write in a summary way, as rapidly as one might speak. The invention of this art is attributed to *Tiron*, *Cicero's* freed man.

774. Towards the end of *Augustus's* reign, those who wrote in abridged notes, (or short hand) took the name of *Actuarii*, because they digested all the public acts. In process of time the number of these officers encreased considerably; their profession became honourable, and of greater extent.

775. Men of letters could not do without the help of the writers of short hand, who commonly were free'd men. They call'd Library-keepers and Antiquaries (*Librarii et Antiquarii*) those who copied in a fine hand what had been written in short hand.

776. *Cryptography* properly so call'd, is the art of writing in a manner that cannot be understood by any but those who have agreed concerning it, by making use of characters unknown, disguis'd, and diversified, call'd Cyphers.

777. The Lacedemonian *Scytal* is a proof that the Greeks knew how to write in Cypher;

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and the Romans had also various kinds of them

778. Soon after the revival of lettres, some authors set themselves to invent new Cyphers. On this head may be consulted the *Steganography* of *Tritheme*, the works of *Cardanus*, father *Kircher*, *Gaspard Schott*, and *Baptist Porta*, adding to them a more modern Treatise of *Mr Breithaupt*, on that subject.

LXV.

Of LIBRARIES

779. The first nation among whom *Libraries* were preserved, is Egypt. The title given to them, inspir'd a desire to be admitted to them; they were call'd the *Treasure of the Remedies of the Soul*.

780. Since these early times, until that of *Alexander* the Great, there is a vacuum in History with regard to Libraries. We know however that there was one at Suza in Persia, from which *Ctesias* and *Metasthene* drew the materials of their histories.

781. One of the most famous Libraries in the world is that which *Ptolomy Soter*, King of Egypt, founded at Alexandria, and of which *Demetrius de Phalere* was first intendant. It was reckon'd to contain four hundred thousand

land volumes; and afterwards, the kings of Egypt gather'd together one more, of three hundred thousand, which they placed in the temple of *Serapis*. The first was burnt during the war of *Julius Caesar* in Egypt, but the second subsisted till the year of our Lord 642. 782. Antiquity makes mention of several other celebrated Libraries, viz that of *Eumenes* king of Pergamus that of *Appellicon*, of *Tyrannion*, of *Lucullus*, of *Atticus*, of *Cicero*, of the temple of *Apollo* made public by *Augustus*, of *Vespasian*, of *Trajan*, of *Pliny*, of *Adrian*, of *Sammonicus*, of *Origen*, of *Alexander of Jerusalem*, of *George of Alexandria*, of *Julius Africanus*, &c.

783. They had no Libraries in France for a long space of time, but among the monks, and it is from them we have derived all the knowledge we have of the works of the Ancients.

784. The invention of printing, by encreasing the number of books, has rendered Libraries both richer, and more common. There are very fine ones in the principal cities of Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Holland, &c. But the two most considerable in the whole world, are, that of the Vatican at Rome, now under the direction of Cardinal *Passionei*, one of the most illustrious members the sacred college ever had; and that of the King of France, the richness of which we may be

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informed of by the magnificent catalogue now publishing.

785. We also call Libraries, works composed in order to give an insight into books and authors; and the writers of them are called Librarians. This knowledge has no limits now. One among the learned who distinguished themselves most in it, in this our age, is *John Albertus Fabricius*.

LXVI.

OF PRINTING.

786. The origin of this art is very uncertain. The most common opinion gives the credit of it to *John Guttemberg*, of Mentz, who, it is said, did not divulge his secret until the year 1457.

787. The progress of Printing was rapid. Born, as it were, in the fifteenth century, the sixteenth beheld it in its full vigour; some printers learned in the languages, and well versed in polite literature, have published, for upwards of 100 years, very correct Editions therein. Such were *Etiennes*, *Vascosan*, *Morel*, *Gryphes*, *Plantin*, *Froben*, *Alde Manuces*, &c.

788. Since that time the avidity of gain has occasion'd a great decay in the exercise of that profession, which the Booksellers dispose of at will

will, and relatively to the welfare of their trade rather than the good of the public.

LXVII.

Of VOYAGES and TRAVELS.

789. When the Relations of Travellers are accurate, they serve as a foundation to Geography, and furnish a more ample detail of the usages and customs of Nations, than history.

790. Altho' the eastern Nations were great navigators, yet they have not left us any memoirs of their long Voyages. On that head the *History of the Commerce of the Ancients* by Mr. *Huet*, may be consulted. X

791. As to the Greeks, the most exact narrative they have transmitted to us in this kind, is written by *Xenophon* under the title of the *Retreat of the ten thousand*. *Strabo's* Geography may also be look'd upon as a relation, executed with abundance of care and judgment. *Arrien*, *Pausanius*, *Denys* the geographer, *Pytheas* and *Eutbymenes*, are worthy of being mentioned. The Latins scarce afford an author worthy of notice. H

792. Since the twelfth Century of the Christian æra, Travellers went in great numbers, first to Asia for the crusades, afterwards to the East Indies by the new passages which the Portuguese open'd by doubling the Cape

of Good-hope, and since to China and Japan, and lastly to the West-Indies, which *Cristopher Colombus* made the discovery of in the latter years of the fifteenth Century.

X 793. The great collection, entitled *History of Travels*, yields abundant matter to satisfy the curiosity of those who are desirous to be masters of the subject.

LXVIII.

Of GEOGRAPHY and CHRONOLOGY.

794. We join together these two branches of knowledge, because they have been call'd the two eyes of history. The one determines the Situation of places, the other measures the duration of times.

795. *Geography*, or the description of the Earth, is a natural consequence of *Astronomy*; for it is by applying to the Terrestrial Globe the points and circles traced on the Celestial Globe, that Geographers are able to fix the principal parts of the Earth.

N 796. 'Tis thought that *Sesostris* first invented the use of Maps in order to describe his empire, after all his conquests. The progress of Geography since that time, has not prevented that of the Ancients from being full of defects. The Greeks, and afterwards the Arabs, have transmitted to us divers geographical works.

797. The

797. The invention of Telescopes has led to Astronomical observations, from which modern Geography derives all its precision. Nothing has contributed more to it than the operation perform'd about thirty years ago, in order to determine the figure of the Earth.

798. We have now several Atlas's that are in great esteem, in which are to be met with a description of all the parts of the Universe, leaving hardly any thing more to wish for. The question concerning the union of the two Continents by the north, remains however as yet problematical.

799. The latin work which Mr Klefeker, Syndic of *Hamburg*, has just published under the title of *Cura Geographica*, may be very useful in directing the choice of the best Maps. N.B.

800. *Chronology* establishes certain fix'd points from which different Nations compute variously the years, and reduces all those æras to an uniform computation.

801. The most celebrated Chronologers are *Joseph Scaliger*, *Bucheler*, *Sabius Calvinus*, *Pertau*, *Usher* and *Marsham*. For the sacred History we have the work of *M. des Vignoles*.

LXIX.

OF ALLEGORICAL TRAVELS.

802. These works, to which the name of Imaginary Republics is also suitable, might have

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have been indicated in the article of *Romances*. They are fictions relative to Morality, to Politics, and sometimes to Religion.

803. Most of these books are ingenious, but the opinions interspersed in some of them, render them dangerous. Those of the first rate are, *Bacon's Atalantis*, *More's Utopia*, *Swift's Gulliver*, *Klimmius's Travels*, &c. In the second may be placed the *History of the Searambos*, the *Travels of James Masse*, &c.

804. *Cyrano de Bergerac's Journey to the Sun and Moon*, *Mercure's World*, *Mr. de Voltaire's Micromegas*, are of a mixed kind, in which natural Philosophy and Satyr are introduced.

LXX.

OF CRITICISM.

805. Among the immense number of objects which present themselves to our researches in the single domain of the Belle-Lettres, we must ever make use of the light of *Criticism*.

806. When Criticism has for its object the examination of works in regard to their stile, expression, allusions, &c. it is call'd *Philology*; and is an art subordinate to Grammar. But Criticism properly so call'd, is the principle from whence we draw rules for the discernment of surreptitious writings and historical facts.

807. The

807. The æra of the latter is not very ancient. The Grammarians of the sixteenth century by familiarising themselves with the Ancients, perceiv'd the necessity of separating the true from the false, and prepared the way to Criticism.

808. Criticism was, it may be said, on the Throne, in the days of *Scaliger*, *Saumaïse*, *Blondel*, *Launoi*, *Gerson*, &c. But the enthusiasm it occasion'd in the minds of those who cultivated it, and the crowd of subaltern literati who meddled with it, brought it to decay.

809. The most instructive work on this subject, is Mr *Le Clerc's Ars Critica*. The rules are very judicious, and the examples well chosen.

810. Criticism is absolutely necessary in all discussions concerning facts; Religion itself, so far from rejecting these discussions allows them to be deeply fathom'd, as the only means to make us keep a just medium between the two extremes of superstition and Incredulity.

LXXI.

Of GRAMMAR.

811. It is not by a reversion of the order of things, that we place here this branch of knowledge as the last. Notwithstanding it is

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is the first that opens for us a passage into the course of letters, it is also that which continually strengthens our footsteps, and bears us up to the end.

812. A grammatical spirit, in the main, is the same thing as a logical spirit, ever attentive to fix properly the signification of terms and expressions, and to ascend to the source of language. In this taste are written, the *Synonyms*, and the *Principles of Grammar*, of Abbé Giraud, as also the *Tropes* of M. du Marfais, and all the articles which he has furnished for the *Encyclopædia*.

813. The study of the languages is requisite to form the Learned, yet that necessity is much lessened, now we are in possession of so great a number of good translations: but, that which is essential, is to speak and write well our own tongue, because it is the language in which we think.

X 814. Etymological works afford an insight into the origin of languages and words. We have the great *Etymologicon* of Vossius, and the *Etymological Dictionary* of Menage, of which a second edition, much enlarged appeared in the year 1750.

815. Divers writers, as Boubours, Vaugelas, and Corneille, have made observations with a view to perfecting the french language; but custom brings new alterations every day, many of which

which rather spoil than refine the language. Proofs of which may be seen in the *Neological Dictionary*.

816. *Profody* is the manner of pronouncing each word according to its three proprieties, viz. Accent, Aspiration, and Quantity. A treatise on this subject for the french tongue had been much wanted, but the Abbé d'Olivet supplied this defect, in 1736.

817. To relieve children in their first study which is the art of reading, divers abridged methods have been invented, among which the *Typographical Bureau* of Mr *Dumas* is eminent. It will be ever difficult to apply those methods to the education of private persons and more so to that of the poor.

LXXII.

Of THE LAST END OF THE STUDY OF THE BELLES-LETTRES.

818. This end is the same as that of all our other studies, and ought to refer to the great design of our existence. Our only business in this World is to enlighten our Minds, and sanctify our Hearts. Whatsoever cannot render us more perfect, or more happy, merits not our attention.

819. It

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819. It is very shameful for those who cultivate human Learning, to yield as they continually do, to the suggestions of the most odious passions, and to disgrace themselves by proceedings the most vile and shocking.

820. Those who join to solid sense a sincere love of Truth, will never seek in all their studies any thing but the good of society, and the innocent pleasure felt in making a continual progress in virtue and truth.

821. When a Man is in this disposition he may effectually find in reading, in writing, in meditating, most useful remedies against wearisomeness, and want of employment, against a disgust to Society, and even against the misfortunes of this Life. The closet of a learned Man is a true asylum, proof against the most violent storms; 'tis an impregnable fort, when wisdom and piety have fixed their abode therein.

REFLEC.

REFLECTIONS

ON

SPECTACLES,

OR

PUBLIC SIEWS.

I Do not intend to handle this subject according to its full extent, because our best writers have already performed that task, and have displayed, on this occasion, all the efforts of their genius; neither do I pretend to examine the arguments for and against Public Siews, which are to be met with in some late writings concerning them. This matter is become too trite, and seems in a manner exhausted. But what determined me to chuse this subject, is a work of the last century, compos'd by one of the most celebrated authors of his time, of which I am surpris'd not one of our moderns has made the least mention. It deserv'd some notice, however, if not for its energy, at least for the singularity of many ideas that are to be found in it. I mean the

X

Treatise

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+ *Treatise on Comedy*, inserted in the third Tome of the *Moral Essays* of M. Nicole. The reading of which by meer chance some time ago, has led me to some reflections, which I think proper to impart to the Public, at the end of this new Edition of my *Principles of the Belles-Lettres*.

M. Nicole's first remark, is, that there has been no apologist for Plays before the age in which he wrote: "and that, he adds, is because the other ages were more simple in regard to good and evil, and that those who professed piety, express'd a constant horror for prophane Plays." If this able Writer had consider'd more attentively his own century, he would have perceiv'd that one might, without aspersing, and disparaging it, justify a change of ideas with regard to plays. For this purpose it is necessary we should trace their history, and specify with exactness its periods. Public Shews were first of all transmitted to us from the pagans, and for a long time they favour'd of their origin. It is even pretended they made part of the religious ceremonies of the heathens, and that this was the chief reason why the Fathers thundered against them, and the Councils stigmatized them with anathemas. It is evident that this first age of public Shews has nothing in common with the drama of our days; and that such pieces as
abound

abound still with ideas borrowed from paganism, as *Amphitryon* and most of the Operas, far from favouring that Religion, they discredit it still more, and discover all its absurdities.

From that extreme they fell into another diametrically opposite. Public Shews had been a part of the Heathen worship: they must need apply them in like manner to that of the Christian. 'Tis well known that the old plays of the French Theatre were scraps of sacred history, and that the mysteries of our Saviour's passion in particular, were play'd in the most indecent manner. M. de Fontenelle and Mess. *Parfait* have supply'd us on that head with all the necessary details. The shocking abuse of this kind of drama caus'd it to be abolish'd. It cannot then come within M. *Nicole's* censure since it no longer existed; and the plays of his time had no manner of likeness to those which I have just mention'd.

Next succeeded Comedy properly so call'd, but free, or rather licentious, such as may be seen in the plays of *Jodelle, Garnier, Hardy,* and *Rotrou*. Let us attend to M. de Fontenelle. "Not the least scruple about manners, (says he) nor even decency. Sometimes we find "a courtesan in bed, who by her discourse "keeps up her character pretty well. Some- "times the heroine of the play is violated, some- "times a married Woman gives a rendez-vous

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“ to her gallant. The first caresses are seen
 “ on the stage; and the Spectators are de-
 “ priv’d of as little as possible of what passes
 “ between the two Lovers.” “ *These are cer-*
 “ *tainly (said he a little before) strange Mo-*
 “ *rals. It does not appear however, that any-*
 “ *body has been scandalised at them.*” By the
 word *anybody*, we must understand the laity,
 the Court, the City; for the Church conti-
 nued ever to condemn Plays, and we cannot
 doubt but there remain’d some persons of learn-
 ing and piety who were sensible of the in-
 conveniencies resulting from them. I own
 when M. *Nicole* wrote, that age of Comedy was
 scarce at an end; some traces of it were
 to be found in the first pieces of *Cornille*,
 and other authors often brought Plays on the
 Stage, which stood in great need of being re-
 fin’d. However he might have already per-
 ceiv’d the possibility of having a reform’d Stage,
 and been sensible that many of the Pieces acted
 in his time, were written with a decency and
 regularity, which, carried on a few degrees
 further, might have transform’d the Theatre
 into a school for Morals.

But here is a grand motive, which makes
 M. *Nicole* talk in the strain he does throughout
 his treatise; a motive that perplexes to this day
 all the writers of the Roman Communion,
 who have any regard for the principles of their
 Church.

Church. It is this contradiction, which nobody cares to be at the trouble of removing; by virtue of which every body frequents the Theatre without scruple, and deem that kind of pastime one of the most lively and even one of the most innocent pleasures of this Life; whilst the Actors and Actresses, loaded with anathemas, and depriv'd of Christian burial, are at one and the same time, Persons ador'd and dishonoured. All that can be said on this matter, has been said already, and therefore I have nothing to add to it. But it is not surprising that the Writer of Port-Royal, who lived before the time of these discussions, scarce knew any thing of the Theatre, but by report, at a time when its reputation, (very bad before) was still altogether equivocal; in short who was wedded to a sect of rigourists bordering on fanaticism; it is not surprising, I say, that M. Nicole, under these disadvantages, should have attempted to treat the partisans of the Stage as Sampson treated the Philistines, by crushing them under the ruins of the Playhouse. So far then I am not surpris'd at his zeal, but I wonder how that zeal should produce an effect very common indeed in those who carry this disposition too far; and that is, to make him forget the rules of logic, and throw him into the most free assertions.

All he alledges to prove that Comedy is in its

its very nature a school and exercise for vice, falls immediately to the ground on producing some dramatic pieces, which absolutely combat vice, and concur, as one may say with sermons, towards the progress of virtue. Do not the *Miser*, and the *Tartuffe*, tend to root out two of the most odious of vices? are not the *Glorieux*, and the *Married Philosopher* very proper to cure Mankind of their most unreasonable pursuits? but in M. *Nicole's* time, the subjects of Plays were nothing but intrigues borrow'd for the most part from the Spanish Theatre; pieces of Character are of later date and those that may be call'd sentimental, the tender Comedy, are still more recent. Had our moralist been present at the acting of some pieces of Mefs. *de la Chaussée* and *de Boissy*, or the *Cenia* of Madam *de Gratiigny*, I fancy he would have been, if not undeceiv'd, at least affected and stagger'd. However to keep to the very pieces that he had in view, the intriguing Plays, wherein every thing turns upon some foolish love affair travers'd by divers obstacles, the unravelling of which is a marriage, it seems to me that he has carried matters too far; he makes upon this, a fally against Love, which is really singular. "The Passion of
 " Love, (says he) is the strongest impression
 " that sin has made on our souls: this is sufficiently evident by the horrible disorders it
 produces

" produces in the world ; and nothing is more
 " dangerous than to excite it, to nourish it,
 " and to destroy whatever curbs, and stops the
 " progress of it. Now what is most conducive
 " to this end, is a certain horror which custom
 " and a good education imprint, and nothing
 " lessens that horror more than Comedy."
 These are terrible words : but do they come
 out of the mouth of a Philosopher, a divine
 too, who speaks from solid principles and dis-
 tinct notions : or must we not rather consider
 them as escap'd from a choleric anchoret, whose
 brain is in a ferment ? what ! is love, the
 inclination of one sex towards the other, the
 effect and the consequence of sin ! Adam, in the
 state of innocence, should he not have lov'd his
 wife, likewise innocent ! does a virtuous hus-
 band sin when he loves a wife that is not only
 virtuous, but lovely and attracting ! cannot a
 lover with lawful views feel a strong passion
 for the object he addresses ! the question is not
 concerning either the extravagancies, or the
 crimes of love : we must consider only the
 foundation of it, the essence, and the deter-
 minations that result from it in every individual,
 in order to decide afterwards whether custom
 and good education imprint a horror for love,
 whether it is proper to eradicate its principles
 from the heart, and whether, on the contrary,
 it would not be directly running counter to
 the

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the views of nature and providence, to weaken only, so far from seeking to destroy, an impression on which the preservation of the species is entirely dependent, and one of the most lively, and lawful pleasures that can be tasted here below.

Tho' the last piece which M. de Voltaire brought on the Stage (I wrote this in 1760) may possibly not be equal to those he wrote in the vigour of his days, yet would I refer M. Nicole to it, were he still being, that he might be convinced, that love may be proposed to citizens who frequent the Play house as a model most worthy of imitation. This piece is entitled *Tancred*; this *Tancred* is not the same as Tasso's, it is a Sicilian Knight, a hero of the same stamp as the knights of old were. *Amenaida*, his spouse, and the Heroine of the Play is virtue personified, with her, Love is a virtue, a duty. Honour, above all that delicate honour which takes offence at the want of esteem, is the motive of this heroine's courage; she dares all dangers, to undeceive her Husband, who suspects her, and is at last overcome with joy at being justified in his sight. *Tancred*, half dead, being satisfied of *Amenaida*'s fidelity, expires on the spot; and *Amenaida* by the sudden transition from the uneasiness of surviving him with a stain, to the pleasure of being acknowledg'd faithful by him
and

and to the grief of seeing him expire, finds her spirits exhausted by the conflict of these three passions, they absorb her strength, and she breathes her last at *Tancred's* feet. Every body melts in tears, and the Play ends. Can there be a finer example of conjugal fidelity, or a stronger lesson for suspicious husbands who are sway'd by jealousy! what dangerous impression can such a sight, leave on the spectators! the mind is instructed by it, and the heart is affected; and if the senses are pleas'd, what precept forbids the enjoyment of similar pleasures? may it not even be urged that the better we relish them, the more shall we be out of conceit with gross, brutish, and dishonourable pleasures? let us continue to follow our moralist. Supposing even that theatrical pieces should have no other object but marriage, and nothing were to be represented but lawful passions, that does not satisfy him, *because*, he expressly said, *tho' marriage makes a right use of concupiscence, the latter is nevertheless ever evil and unruly; and we are not allow'd to excite it, either in ourselves or others.* I have endeavour'd to come at the sense of these words, and cannot find any in them, at least that is rational. In order to marry, according to the impulse of nature, (for I am not speaking of marriages contracted from interest, policy, &c.) the parties must love one another, must desire and wish to be united

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united really and naturally to each other. Without this desire, and even were it not very violent, the world would be at an end. There are so many inconveniencies inseparable from the married state, 'tis so heavy a yoke, a path so thick set with thorns, even for the happiest couples, that nobody would venture upon it, if the most powerful of all attractives did not solicit and invincibly determine us thereto. Is this what M. *Nicole* calls concupiscence, and has he any grounds for saying that it is *in itself ever evil and irregular*? the direct contrary ought to be asserted. In *itself* it is always good and orderly, as are all the passions, all inclinations, all natural instincts; but it may become, like all other passions, a violent and disorderly state, a delirium, a madness. Then the business will be to decide, whether the Theatre really inflames it, and causes it to exceed its proper bounds. This has, certainly never happen'd to those who were present at the acting of *Polyeucte*, *Cinna*, *Andromache* and *Briannicus*, nor at that of the *Misanthrope*, the *Learned Women*, and other good comic pieces which have appeared since *Moliere*. Tragedy affects us, Comedy diverts us; every one retires well pleased with the performance; and if they retain some of the striking passages, these generally speaking, do not contain the least seed of corruption. I say generally speaking

ing, for I do not pretend to vindicate without exception every thing spoken on the Stage. That is not possible, neither is it necessary. If people must abstain from every thing, not entirely exempt from fault or danger, they must sequester themselves from society, have no share in conversation, read no works of taste or amusement; for strictures and maxims, that are hurtful slip in every where, or they may become so to those who make an ill use of them. But I will be bold to say, that there is less danger in seeing, for the space of two or three hours, a fine and good theatrical piece acted, than in spending the same time in three fourths of the common companies, or in reading the greater part of the best written and most esteemed books. I know very well that one might avoid all these dangers, by taking sanctuary in such a retirement as that of the Mess. of Port-Royal, or by turning Cartesian. But is that the vocation for a rational man? is it even that of a Christian the most attach'd to his religion? this is what all the *Nicoles* in the world will never be able to prove.

Even some doctors, of his own communion even before the end of the last century, held a quite different language from his, and which agrees with ours. I find in the *History of the works of the Learned*, for the month of December 1795. by M. *Basnage de Baural*, an
extract

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extract of a letter from a divine, consulted in order to know, whether Comedy may be allow'd, or whether it ought to be absolutely prohibited. This letter containing 70 pages in duodecimo, was printed at Paris by Guignard. The author, after several very judicious reflections, says, that we should always distinguish the merit of things corrupted, from the wickedness of those who corrupt them: the abuse which mankind make of so many objects not being a sufficient reason for condemning them. "Society, continues he, the commerce of the world, afford many more opportunities to hearts so ready to become inflam'd; and so susceptible of passion, than the sight of a Comedy. It is there that virtue meets with so many rocks and is so often shipwreck'd. Must we for that banish ourselves from the world, to attend solely to our salvation, and to avoid being diverted by so many objects so capable of seducing us? hence it would follow that a woman, because she is beautiful, is obliged in conscience to hide herself, lest she should kindle criminal desires; or she must be sequester'd from the sight of men for the welfare of mankind, so that she may not become a fatal object of temptation: must we, said *Licurgus*, root up our vines, on account of the intemperance of drunkards? it is not then reasonable to abolish Comedy, nor to

deprive

“ deprive ourselves of a decent diversion, under pretence that persons who are weak, or perhaps already grown effeminate by voluptuousness, may make a bad use of it. We are not obliged to retrench, for their sake, the most agreeable amusement of men of sense, nor to abolish what is ingenious and instructive in Comedy, in favour of ill-disposed minds, who seek therein pretences to palliate their irregularities. The human mind having need of relaxation (*arcum non semper tendit Apollo,*) and to recover new strength by repose, Comedy is a lawful and allowable pleasure.” Thus thought and expressed himself a divine, whose name I know not, and who certainly has not been held in so high repute as M. *Nicolas*, tho’ he was superior to him, at least if one may judge by their arguments on the subject in question.

The same question was debated some time afterwards in England. The two champions were Mess. *Collier* and *Dennis* *. The first may be call’d a furious adversary against the Theatre: it is true he has a spight to the English Stage, where there are in fact irregularities and indecencies which cannot be justified. Mr. *Dennis* answers as well as he can, and of-

* See the Extracts from their Writings, in the *History of the Works of the Learned*, tom. xiv. p. 215, and 293. no 22.

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fers at least some good arguments to prove the possibility and utility of having decent Plays.

Let us return to the treatise under examination. What follows, is still more extraordinary, one can hardly, while reading it, believe one's own eyes. Comedy is a damnable diversion, because it annihilates the duty of Christian watchfulness, and no person has ever thought proper to prepare himself for it by prayer. *Risum teneatis?* what, are all diversions prohibited, because one cannot begin and end them with a prayer! This reminds me of those ridiculous questions, to be found in some casuists, which I dare not quote but in latin, *Num inter naturalis debiti et conjugalis officii egeriem liceat psallere, orare, &c.* Let us answer seriously however. 1st. The life of a righteous man is a continual prayer, and even the only one that is acceptable to the supreme Being. That of a Christian is conformable to the apostolic precept: *Whether ye eat, whether ye drink, whatsoever ye do, let it be for the glory of God.* 2d. Why should it be deem'd a greater evil to go to a play, without having previously prayed, than to amuse ones self at tennis, billiards, or any other recreation, which is not usually preceded by an invocatory act? 3d. Why, if we have a mind, might we not put up a prayer, before going to the Play, as well as on sitting down to table. The intention would

would be pretty much the same, we should give thanks to God for his gifts, for the pleasures he bestows on us; and beg of him to preserve us from all abuse, and all excess. 4th. In fine, either Christian watchfulness resembles the practice of those Orientals, who occupy themselves with looking constantly on the tip of their nose, and who are in despair when they are made to lose sight of it: or else it allows all decent recreations, proportionably to the occasion we may have for them. The whole must then center in the first and only query: whether it is unseemly, or criminal to frequent the Theatre? or still more precisely, whether Tragedy, or Comedy are hurtful and dangerous representations? Now this last assertion we deny, under the restrictions already indicated, *i. e.* Such pieces, as Morality and Religion agree in condemning, should be forever banish'd from the Stage.

I look upon the argument which *M. Nicole* builds upon, as mere sophistry. "If persons who live in retirement and remote from the world, meet nevertheless with great obstacles in leading a Christian life, even in the very center of monasteries; how many wounds and falls may they be liable to, who leading a life altogether sensual, expose themselves to temptations, which the most magnanimous could not be able to resist."

There is scarce a word here, that may not be censur'd. Hermits when thinking to fly from temptations, in some measure draw them on themselves and render them insupportable. Man is never in worse company than alone, when he surrenders himself to a forced retirement, for which nature has not form'd him, nor religion required of him as a duty. As it has been said that chagrin got up behind, and gallop'd away with the Man that wanted to fly from him, one may say likewise that all the vicious inclinations, all the agitations of the flesh and of the sensual appetites, awaken with more vigour in those who have broke off all commerce with the world, than in those who live in the midst of it, who employ themselves usefully, and amuse themselves decently. To be convinc'd of this, there needs no more than to read in the lives of some pious Hermits, what strange remedies they had recourse to, in order to extinguish a fire that consum'd them to the very bones. As to monasteries, they never were the abode of tranquillity, of disengagement from the world, and of sublime virtue. There, all is intrigue, cabal, hatred, envy, and disunion: every vice of the mind bears sway there, and those of the flesh are far from being banish'd thence. M. Nicole is then much mistaken if he thinks to avail himself here of the argument *a majori*

ad minus, and to have a right to say: If Hermits and monks find so much difficulty in working out their salvation, how are they to be sav'd that go the Play? I shall not hesitate to say, they may be sav'd more easily; that a Magistrate who shall have administered justice impartially; a man of letters who shall have made useful studies in his closet; and every Man who shall have fulfill'd the duties of his station during eight or ten hours in the day will be better prepar'd for salvation, after he shall have spent two hours at the Play, than a Prior, who, after having sung Matins, Vespers and Complines, shall quarrel with his Monks, or than Monks who shall provoke their Prior. This is really to understand neither the World, nor Religion; 'tis merely viewing objects thro' a dormer-window or from underneath a Monk's cowl, to judge and argue as our Author does here. The other part of his argument is altogether as false. Going to the Play, according to his notion, is leading a sensual life, and exposing ones self to the strongest temptations. This is begging the question, and therefore requires no answer. Mankind must have some recreation; but I am not making here an apology for idlers, and people who make it their business to run after Plays; I speak of the laborious Man, who is useful to society; he requires some relaxation

laxation; I believe nobody will dispute that with me; and therefore I say we may venture a wager that the most innocent and most useful diversion he can take, is that of seeing a decent Play, and that such a spectacle is not a chimaera really existing.

This being granted, Mr. Nicole may go on at his leisure, and add, "That Comedy is a temptation sought after on purpose; that there are rashness, pride, and impiety, in believing ourselves able to resist, without grace, the temptations that we meet with in Comedy; that there are presumption and madness in supposing that God will always deliver us through his grace, from a danger to which we expose ourselves voluntarily and without necessity." This heap of words and exaggerations still contain the same ideas, that is to say the most free suppositions.

Let us not, however, imagine that our moralist's resources are exhausted; he calls to his help a very powerful one, that is the Devil. Men have ever been fond of making him intervene in the affairs of this World; and as the phrase is, *Deus ex machina*, one might say on an infinite number of occasions where a diabolical action is brought in play, *Diabolus ex machina*. I do not pretend to contest, either the existence of that evil spirit, or the operations which the scripture attributes to him.

But

But we live in too enlightned an age to be scrupulous of saying that the Devil does not concern himself more with every thing that is daily imputed to him, than he concerned himself about the possession of the Nuns of Loudun. Suppose even he were let loose, if I may so express myself, and had power to tyrannize at will over mankind, I don't believe that he would amuse himself with such fooleries as have been attributed to him by the Autors of *Demonomanias*, among others that of *Macon*, a little book formerly very much in vogue, and which contains a recital of the waggish tricks the Devil played in the house of an old Minister in that city, whose name was *Perrault*. It was suspected with good reason that this was a plot or intrigue of a valet and a servant maid, who wanted to drive away their master, that they might have elbow room. And such like tricks have always been the unravelling of every scene of this nature, when pains have been taken to dive into them. Examples of this may be seen in a Romance extremely well written, entitled, *The false Clelia*. X

But this is a sort of digression: the question is what share the Devil has in public Shews? the ancient Fathers of the Church have made him intervene therein, especially in the public dances, and have said, that it was he that moved the feet of the Dancers of both sexes; this

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this takes in that first æra of public Shews, of which I have spoken, when they were yet tainted with the idolatry and corruption of manners which abounded among the Pagans. If men will call every thing diabolical, which tends to deprave mankind, because it agrees with the Devil's views, who is the first of all seducers, I will grant that the Fathers were in the right to make use of the strongest motives in order to persuade Christians to preserve themselves from that contagion. Let any one read the account of the Festivals of Daphne, which were celebrated in her Grove near Antioch, and he will see they were worthy of the worshippers and slaves of the Devil. But that is very far from the present state of public diversions; and it would be as difficult to prove by fact as by law, that the Devil presides, or ought to preside at the acting of the Plays that we have indicated, and such as are similar to them. He certainly would not find his account in that of the *Tartuffe*: it is his interest that men should be false, and deceitful: to unmask, and confound hypocrisy, is to destroy his reign. Thus, without making a comparison between Comedy and the Gospel, it would be nevertheless true that it would be in the same case, that is to say, that if we attribute it to Satan, he must have been against himself. We may then look upon as meer declamations,

declamations, what Mr. *Nicole* says, That Comedy destroys the ramparts which fenced the avenues of our souls from the Devil, and that he may then enter easily therein; and supposing even that the sight of a Comedy should not immediately excite evil thoughts in us, the Devil knows how to take his time, when he finds a favourable opportunity, to make the imperceptible seeds which it had sown in our hearts, to shoot up, and bring forth the fruits of death.

The remainder of our moralist's Treatise is equally wrong. He proposes to himself to prove that it is impossible to love God, to lead a Christian Life, to attend to the duty of prayer to render to Jesus Christ what we owe him, whilst we frequent the Theatre. Let any one judge of his enthusiasm on this matter by the following passage: "Would it not be mocking God and Man, to say that we go to the Play for Christ's sake? would we dare to offer him such an action, and say to him: "Lord, it is in obedience to thee that I am going to the Play; thy spirit shall conduct me thither; thyself shall be the motive of this action; it is by thy cross that thou hast purchased it for me? is there any body blind, or hardened enough to bear without horror the impiety of this language?" It is perhaps carrying things too far, thus to confound the greatest

greatest objects, the most august mysteries of Religion with discussions of this nature. But, since Mr. *Nicole* compels us to it, let us answer him, that what he looks upon as the height of impiety, is none at all; and tho' nobody holds such language as he would fain put in the mouth of the partisans of the Stage, to make a contrast with their conduct, that contrast would not be real. A good Christian, as we have intimated already, who closes the day with a prayer, gives God thanks for having preserved him, for having given him a competency, and having joined with it some pleasure, which is not less an effect of the goodness of the supreme Being. If therefore, after having been that day at the Play, where he enjoyed a harmless pleasure, of which he did not receive the least impression of a vicious kind (which is not begging the question, like all Mr. *Nicole's* thesis, but a fact grounded on experience) if, I say, he gives thanks to God for favours bestowed on him that day, that one is included implicitly; and I dare say it might be so, explicitly, without the least profanation.

One of the most interesting discussions contained yet in this treatise, is that concerning many worldly maxims of false honour, of vain-glory, of revenge, which being pompously delivered on the Stage, are adopted by the audience, and have an influence on their conduct.

duct. Mr. *Nicole* quotes some examples of this, taken from the *Cid* and the *Horatii*, which were the finest pieces of his time, and are still in great esteem. I answer in two words, that those maxims have not produced the effects attributed to them, but on the contrary, as soon as the *Cid*, for example, appeared, all with one common voice blamed the indecency of *Chimene's* passion for the murderer of her father; and the idea of her marriage with him, notwithstanding that the Poet had referred it to a more distant time, appeared quite shocking. It is the same with regard to the Roman greatness, so overstrained and savage, that this admirable poet knew how to express so nobly; he who was more a Roman than the Romans themselves. We were astonished and delighted, but not the less sensible of the false, and even the vicious. The example of *Horatius* who kills his sister because she expresses too much affection for the memory of an object worthy of her love, will never create the like sentiments, nor be productive of similar actions. I say, in the second place, that the Theatre is altered in this respect since *Corneille*; that *Racine*, *Crebillon*, *Voltaire*, and the other great Poets who have since reigned on the Stage, have spoken, as I may say, a more humane language, so that the striking sentences in their pieces, are for the most part, true maxims, conformable

conformable to the principles of the soundest morality. In short, I observe, that the heroes, the theatrical personages, being men, and obliged to resemble men, if we expect that representations should appear probable and be instructive, those heroes, those personages must have faults, and their discourse must bear the stamp of them; yet this does not render those speeches dangerous. What can be finer, in the dramatic kind, than the *Phedra* of *Racine*: and yet what is there more detestable, more odious, than the designs of *Phedra*, her machinations, and especially the counsels of her confidant *Oenona*? Will it be said, that the sight or perusal of that Piece will produce *Phedras* and *Oenonas*? this would be the height of absurdity. The scripture itself, in proposing to us the finest examples, and the most worthy of our imitation, makes no difficulty to let us, not only perceive the traces of human imperfection, but the stains of the most enormous vices. *David* ravishing *Bathsebah*, and putting to death *Uriah*, is he not as criminal as *Phedra* inflamed with love for *Hippolytus*, and causing his destruction?

I might stop here, because it seems to me that with the help of the principles I have just laid down, there remain no objections against Plays to which we may not give a satisfactory answer. But in order that the consequence of these principles

principles be not extended beyond my design, I declare, first, That by Spectacles, or Shews, I meant only in this tract, Tragedy and Comedy: Secondly, That my apology takes in only the Tragedies and Comedies in which the laws of decency are strictly observed: Thirdly, That I do not approve the frequenting of the Theatre, when it becomes a passion and a business, but I look upon it as lawful on the footing of an innocent recreation; adding even this counsel, to abstain from this recreation, if we find that it renders us passionately fond of Shews, just as we must renounce gaming, if we feel an inclination to become gamesters: Fourthly, In fine, in the most decent Pieces, there may be without doubt, some alterations and amendments still wanting, and it were to be wished, they were made, and the views of Mr. *Riccobini* for the reformation of the Stage were followed and brought to perfection, and some learned criticks constantly commissioned to watch as well over the pieces censured, as those brought on the Stage, which would put the finishing hand to rendering this pleasure as pure as it may and ought to be. After these explanations, I don't believe any person can censure me, either on the choice of this subject, or the manner in which I have handled it.

F I N I S.

36. Milton
 37. Voltaires Henriade
 54. Sophocles
 59. Aristophanes Plutus
 61. Count of Lovi
 Sports under the Elm
 62. Parables & Tragedies of 2 Jane
 66. Corneilles medee — (Ed)
 Horat — (Anna — Polyonchus)
 68. Racines Andromache
 Britannicus — Bajazet — Mithridate
 Iphigenia — Athaliah
 72. Voltaires Tragedies
 Tamerlan
 Moliere's Misanthrope — Tartuffe
 74. Regnards Glorieux
 Des Touches married Philosophes
 76. Shakespears
 77. Congreve — Vanbrugh — Wycherley
 95. Racines Pastorals
 96. madam Deshoulieres
 107. Malherbes Odes
 108. Rousseaus
 112. Pops Essay on Man.
 122. Reginis Satires —
 Boileaus — 2^d art of poetry — Lutra



Caillie's Epigramm. 126.

Virgil's Georgics - Varieties Rural Life -
Rome's Gardens - Vida.

113.

10. Henry's Religious Hist.

11. Boswell's abridgem^t of Gen. Hist.

12. De Thou's History

73. Lives of Cardinal Richelieu - Lewis 14
Cicero.

74. Henault's Chron. abridgem^t of Hist. of
France

75. Virgil's Histories.

77. Buffon - D'Aubenton.
Natural History

81. Letters of a Portuguese Nun.
Persian Letters. 208. and Grapigny's

91. Bayle's Intelligence from Gen.

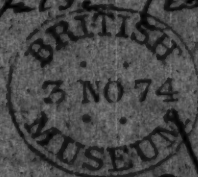
92. Chapelles Eng. Library, followed Roches
Library Memoirs of Great Br. as followed by
Brit. Library.

95. Moreri's Dict. of facts, 5 vols.

Bayle's Dict. pyrrhonic -

01. Locke's - Nichol's - Hume's; Spinoza
Montaigne's.

202. Bayle's Characters
 Rochefort's maxims
 Esprit's Gallery of human virtues
 Du Clos on manners of present age
- 205 Fontenelle's Dialogues — Worlds.
 Fenelon's
 Vernetti's Socratic Dialogues.
206. nature Displayed
 Basini's Hist. of Bees — 23 of Insects.
207. Turkish Spy — Persian Letters.
209. Fenelon's Solimanides.
 Terapson's Letters.
 Ramsay's Travels of Cyrus.
211. Chambers's Mythol. Dict.
212. Montfaucon's antiq.
 Ruins of Palmyra.
221. Hudt's Commerce of Ancients.
222. History of Travels, large.
225. Le Clerc's ars critica.
226. Menage's etymol. Dict. 1750
247. The false Colia.



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